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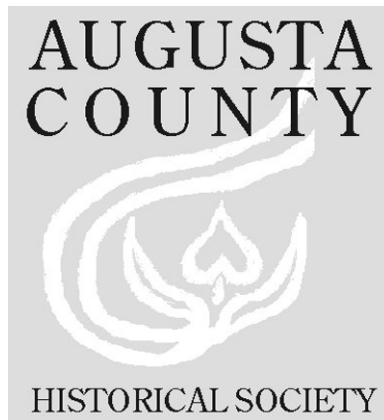


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Augusta Historical Bulletin: Editorial Policy

The editors of the *Augusta Historical Bulletin* welcome submissions relating to any topic or period in the history of Augusta County, Virginia, and its wider environs. Submissions may take the form of articles, research notes, edited documents, or indexes to historical documents. Other formats might be acceptable, but prospective authors of such submissions are encouraged to consult with a member of the editorial board. With rare exceptions, the *Bulletin* does not publish manuscripts that focus exclusively on genealogical matters. Authors should strive to make their contributions accessible to a broad readership. In matters of form and style, authors should adhere to the guidelines and strictures set forth in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed., or Kate L. Turabian, et al., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed., both of which are widely available in libraries and bookstores. A style sheet, prepared by the editors of the *Bulletin*, is available upon request. Authors should submit four double-spaced copies of their manuscripts, with endnotes where applicable, and include photocopies of any illustrations. Upon acceptance of the manuscript for publication, authors must provide an electronic copy of it, as well as publishable-quality illustrations.

Manuscripts or requests for style sheets should be sent to: The Augusta County Historical Society, Attention: Bulletin Editors, P.O. Box 686, Staunton, Virginia 24402-0686. Please try to submit proposed manuscripts by June 1, 2011. Queries may also be sent to: Nancy Sorrells (lotswife@comcast.net) or Katharine Brown (klbrown@cfw.com).





Virginia's Secession Convention

The Staunton delegates speak

Compiled by Dr. Edward Ayers

Editor's Note: Dr. Edward Ayers, President of the University of Richmond, was the guest speaker at the Augusta County Historical Society banquet held May 10, 2011, at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center. Dr. Ayers discussed Virginia's Secession Convention in 1861 and, in particular, the leading role played by Augusta County's delegates. As a follow-up for the Bulletin he offers these extracts of speeches from Staunton delegates during the secession debates. A complete picture of Virginia's Secession Convention, including transcriptions of all the speeches, can be found at <http://collections.richmond.edu/secession/>.

Virginia and the Crisis of Union

On February 13, 1861, delegates representing all counties in Virginia met to decide how the state would respond to recent events, especially Abraham Lincoln's election and South Carolina's secession. They voted to remain in the Union and hoped that a compromise could be reached to defuse the situation. Two months later, the same men voted to secede from the United States, sparking a radically different war than might otherwise have taken place. Secession: Virginia and the Crisis of Union links the fully transcribed text of these debates with a wealth of contextual information, giving users the tools to ask why the men who brought the war into their own counties and neighborhoods did so. (From the University of Richmond's Digital Scholarship Lab)

The following are speeches by Staunton delegates George Baylor and John Baldwin show the intensity of debate at this convention.

George Baylor, February 28

Mr. BAYLOR, of Augusta

I desire, Mr. President, to say a few words upon the question now before this body. I am not known as a public man. I am a very obscure individual, I admit, but for all that, I do not hail from an obscure place. I am from the town of Staunton, in the county of Augusta; and the county of Augusta is within an inch of the centre of the Commonwealth of Virginia. I am glad to see that almost



every gentleman who has yet undertaken to speak upon the subject before us, has not displayed anything like party politics. All seem to unite in opinion as to the impropriety of allowing party politics to enter into considerations or relations of the questions, which command the attention of this body.

I say, Mr. President, that I am glad of that, because it is to the principle of excluding party politics from this question, that I owe my seat in this body. It has been my fortune—whether good or bad I will not say—to belong to a party in politics that was always in a minority in the county of Augusta, and but for the fact that my people rose above party in electing delegates here, your humble speaker never would have been honored with a seat in this body.

One resolution offered by my friend from Rockbridge [Mr. MOORE] the very first, I believe—sets forth some grievances which have been committed by the Northern people against the South. It has been said often, and doubtless will be said again, that there have not been complaints enough urged against the people of the North; that they were not abused sufficiently; that it is not enough that these resolutions should set forth our grievances, but that we ought to go further, and abuse them in our speeches, and even in the resolutions which may be presented here.

Mr. President, I have heard it said out of this Hall, and I think it has been said upon this floor to-day by the gentleman from Orange [Mr. MORTON] that the State of Virginia ought not to hesitate for one moment to go out of the Union. I do not know that I understood him correctly. If I did not, I beg leave to be corrected.

Mr. MORTON—

You did, sir.

Mr. BAYLOR continued.

And for what? Go out for what? I told my people, Mr. President, before I left home, and also whilst I canvassed my county, that I would promise them to be at my post, and I would not only want to see the first man who would offer a resolution to take the old State of Virginia out of the Union, but I would want to hear his reasons for it. Sir, it has been said here that that ought to be done, but nothing has yet been advanced to satisfy me that there is any good reason for it. Go out of the Union for what, Mr. President? Why, it is said that the Union is already dissolved. Admit that it is, in part. Six or seven States



have gone out. Six or seven of the links of the great chain which has bound this great Union together, have gone. But, Mr. President, there are twenty-six yet remaining, I believe. The old Commonwealth of Virginia is not among the number that have gone out. No, sir ; the stars and stripes are yet unfurled over her; and I, for one, say that I intend to hold on to the stars and stripes until the very last hope has fled. Some gentlemen complain of others, because they are too long in coming to any point at which they may be understood, as indicating the place where they stand. I trust, sir, that before I get through with my remarks, there will be no complaint of that sort concerning me. I intend to show to you, Mr. President, and I intend to let this Convention know, precisely where I stand, before I resume my seat. But, Mr. President, according to the usual custom, I would much rather if it would be the convenience of this Convention, for it to adjourn for the present.

...

[next day]

I know how it was in my county, and everywhere else that I was during the Presidential campaign. All parties declared the Breckinridge party, the Bell party, and the Douglas party—all declared that the election of Lincoln, in itself, was no cause for the dissolution of the Union. And, sir, if it was not regarded as the cause then, why is it regarded as the cause now? What have the Northern people done since that time against the rights of the South? Sir, if your rights have become more insecure since that election than they were before, how has that fact been brought about? Not by anything that the people of the non-slaveholding States have done, but, I am sorry to say, on account of the acts of the representatives of the cotton States. Why, sir, it was admitted on all hands that, as Congress stood when Mr. Lincoln was elected, he would have had no power; that—if he was the worst man in the world—he could have no power to touch a hair of our head. The power was against him—Congress was against him, the Supreme Court of the United States was against him and, I ask you, sir—placed as he was in that position if he would not have been more an object of pity than of dread?

But it is said that we are now in danger; that the Republican



party has the ascendancy in Congress. I am sorry to say that that is true. But is that the fault of Virginia? Is Virginia to be blamed for that unhappy condition of affairs? And must she, therefore, go out of the Union? No sir! The fault is not with her. The fault is with the seceded States. When they had the power in their own hands they surrendered it, and placed it in the hands of their enemies; and now, sir, because they did wrong, they ask us to do wrong also.

Mr. President, I can see no reason, as I remarked before, why Virginia should be in a hurry to go out of the Union, if it is a constitutional measure. If it is a constitutional measure for any State to secede at pleasure, let the old Commonwealth delay a little at any rate, and when she is ready to go out, then she will have nothing to do but to just slide out quietly. But I am opposed to her going out of the Union at all, Mr. President. I want Virginia to stand where she has always stood; I want her to stand where she has stood for more than three quarters of a century. I want her to contend for her rights in the Union, and not out of it. Did you ever know, Mr. President, did you ever hear of a man getting his rights by running away from them? I had thought that the best way, when you sought to secure your rights, was to look your adversary in the face and tell him what you wanted to demand your rights and not run away from them.

...

Mr. President: I know very well that I and those who occupy the position that I do, have been called submissionists. Now, I have to say upon that point, that the very instinct of my nature revolts against submission to any thing that I know to be wrong. I say, that while I, and the people I represent, are opposed to war; yet, Mr. President, if to rally around the stars and stripes of your country; if to contend for the honor of that flag for which Washington fought, and for which many of our soldiers gave up their lives in the revolutionary war, and again in the war of 1812—if that constitutes a Submissionist, I am one.

Yes, Mr. President, submission is resorted to because we don't want to fight, it is said. We don't want to fight, I admit, sir, unless it is necessary. We don't want to go to war for the fun of the thing. We don't want to fight for military distinction and military honors. God forbid that I, or any of the people I represent on



this floor, should ever want to stain their hands in the blood of a brother for military glory. But, sir, if ever the time comes—and I trust in God it never may come—but if the time ever comes, when the honor and the dignity and the interest of the Commonwealth of Virginia require it, I tell you, sir, that I and the people I represent here, will want to be counted in the ring. Yes, sir, we will want to be there. It is not the men, Mr. President, who make the most noise about fighting, that are the first to go into it.

My position is simply this: I am in favor of exhausting all fair and honorable means first. Those are the sentiments of the people I represent here; that we ought first to use every possible means to settle all our difficulties; that we ought to resort to Constitutional measures, and not to inaugurate a revolution. I don't think we have resorted to all Constitutional measures yet. I believe that all our difficulties can be settled. And why do I believe it? Why, sir, as I said yesterday, gentlemen are in the habit of denouncing the whole North, when they speak of the aggression of the Northern States.

...

We may talk, sir, about a Southern Confederacy or half a dozen Southern Confederacies; but I tell you that you will never have a better Government than the one which we have had—and which we yet have, I trust. I believe, sir, that the Constitution of the United States and the Government of the United States are the best Constitution and Government which ever God permitted a free people on this earth to enjoy. I do not believe that any Confederacy that can be built up anywhere will ever approach to the Government of the United States, and you may build up as many as you please.

John Baldwin, March 28

Situated at the centre of the State, connected with both East and West by the great lines of travel and improvement, and with the great Valley, midway of which she stands, she is connected with each and all by every tie, social and industrial, that can bind communities together. She occupies a position in the great heart of the Old Dominion, and I claim that he who represents her people is entitled to speak for a representative county of this Commonwealth.

Sir, in behalf of such a county as this, I desire to be heard; not merely for the reasons that I have stated, but because she is identified with



every interest and every institution that is recognized as of value in Virginia; and in regard to them all occupies what I might call a great central, conservative position.

...

I say, then, that viewed from that standpoint, there is but one single subject of complaint which Virginia has to make against the government under which we live; a complaint made by the whole South, and that is on the subject of African slavery. Why, sir, what is the position of Virginia on other subjects? What is the position of this Commonwealth in regard to all the great principles of government, in regard to all the great measures of administration which have been in progress since our government was first inaugurated? It is the pride and boast of our people that on all the great questions of administrative policy, on the great doctrines of constitutional construction, Virginia But, sir, the great cause of complaint now is the slavery agitation, and the questions growing out of it. If there is any other cause of complaint which has been influential in any quarter, to bring about the crisis which is now upon us; if any State or any people have made the troubles growing out of this question, a pretext for agitation instead of a cause of honest complaint, Virginia can have no sympathy whatever, in any such feeling, in any such policy, in any such attempt. It is the slavery question. Is it not so? We have heard, for days past, the great issues before the country discussed by able and eloquent gentlemen upon this floor—and I ask this Committee if any man has yet been heard, in all the recounted injuries that we are alleged to have suffered from the administration of the Government—if he has heard, in the long list of apprehended wrongs in the future, the slightest reference to anything else, to any other ground of complaint, except this subject of slavery? Thus we have it confessed, upon all hands, that in the main—with this one exception—this great government of ours, from its origin down to the present time, in its administration, in all the departments that concern the industry, the energy, the business of thirty millions of people, has been conducted upon the principles and in a manner satisfactory to the people of Virginia. [Here Mr. HOLCOMBE nodded assent.] Put down that admission before we proceed to consider the grievances alleged to grow out of the slavery agitation.



Sir, when I come to consider this question of slavery and the agitations growing out of it, I cannot ignore the fact that here in Virginia there seems to be an impression entertained in some quarters, and industriously disseminated, that upon this great question Virginia is divided—that some of the people of Virginia, in some portions of the State, and some of their representatives upon this floor in this great Convention of her sovereignty, are, for some reason or other, not to be trusted upon this great paramount interest of Virginia. Sir, this idea is not new to me, or to the members of this body. I have heard it, with pain and sorrow, for years; not coming from abroad, not alleged against us by our enemies. No, it has come up from the midst of our own State family. It has come from Virginia's own sons—the insinuation, the suspicion, the charge, that the people of particular localities—that the people of particular political associations in Virginia, are not to be trusted to deal with this great leading, and most important institution of the State.

...

I have always entertained the opinion that African slavery, as it exists in Virginia, is a right and a good thing—on every ground, moral, social, religious, political and economical—a blessing alike to the master and the slave—a blessing to the non-slaveholder and the slaveholder.

George Baylor, April 17

Mr. GEORGE BAYLOR, of Augusta—

I have lived to see fifty seven winters and summers; I have had many trials and difficulties to endure during that time; but I have to confess that this hour is the most trying that I have ever experienced in my life.

We are told that some of my own countrymen have gone on to Harper's Ferry, where, perhaps, blood will be shed. Who are gone, I know not; but I do not deem it improbable that my own son is among the number. If he is not, certainly, some of the best friends I have are there.

I came here, as you know, and pronounced myself a Union man, determined at the same time to hold to that position until the very last hope had failed; and, sir, the last hope has failed. I believe that the Union is eternally gone, and the question is now, what is to be done? I had very little difficulty in making up my mind to vote for the proposition of the gentleman from Fauquier [Mr. SCOTT], because I thought it was right, and because I thought it was better that the people should have an opportunity of choosing between two propositions-of deciding



whether they would consolidate the border States first, or whether they would adopt an Ordinance of Secession without that procedure. That proposition has been voted down, and now the single question comes up of secession or no secession. And what am I to do? I am sorry to say, sir, that I cannot approve of it. Yet, this Convention is going to pass it, whether I vote for it or not; but, in any event, I am determined to go wherever Virginia goes, and I would have gentlemen not suppose for a moment that because I cannot vote for this measure, and would prefer that proposed by the gentleman from Fauquier, I would throw any obstacle in the way of the action of the Convention. I may be doing wrong, but if I do, it is an error of the head, and not of the heart. I can say, in the language of one who figured more than three hundred years ago in the Old World, whose name and fame will stand forth in the pages of history identified with all that is noble and independent down to the end of time itself-I mean the illustrious Luther. When he was summoned before the dignitaries of the Old World, he observed:

"I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor advisable to do anything against conscience. Here I stand; I cannot act otherwise."

I don't know whether the debates of this day will ever see the light, but if they do, I want it to be seen why I cannot vote for this measure; and I want it to appear that I declared, whatever may be my vote, that I would go wherever the majority of the people of Virginia would go.



Why did Upper Valley voters shift allegiance in 1861?

By Dr. Daniel A. Métraux

.Editor's Note: Dr. Daniel A. Métraux, professor of Asian studies at Mary Baldwin College, is AHB associate editor and book review editor. He enjoys delving into various aspects of the area's local history and this particular topic complements the 2011 banquet topic on the political crisis enveloping area citizens in the spring of 1861.

The politics of secession dominated the political scene in Staunton and other Valley of Virginia residents throughout the latter months of 1860 and early months of 1861. Voters hotly debated the main question facing them – whether to join their brethren in the lower South who had left the Union en masse in late 1860 or early 1861 or to stay within the Union. Which way they and other Virginia voters ultimately decided to go would have grave implications for the future of the United States and the new Confederate nation. Virginia was the wealthiest and most highly populated of all the southern states and had the largest number of slaves. It was also the most urban and industrialized state in the South and its proximity to the nation's capital posed a direct threat to the government of the United States.

A careful study of how voters in Augusta, Rockingham, and Rockbridge Counties cast their ballots in the 1860 presidential election and in the February 1861 election for delegates to the state convention to determine Virginia's future and of editorials in county newspapers indicates strong opposition to any talk of secession and a desire to stay in the Union. But does this mean that most Valley residents were in fact pro-Union? The evidence points to a strong negative response to this question. Valley folk were strong in their support for slavery, but feared that secession would surely lead to civil war, an invasion from the North, and forced emancipation. They favored remaining in the Union because they felt that the Constitution protected their right to own slaves and that secession would mean the termination of this protection. When by late March 1861 they no longer felt that the federal government would protect their interests, they quickly abandoned their very shallow pro-union stance in favor of secession. When the war began, a vast majority of eligible men fought in the Confederate army.¹

Several essays in a fascinating new book, *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia from Secession to Commemoration*, edited by Virginia Civil War



historian Edward L. Ayers and two distinguished colleagues, Gary W. Gallagher and Andrew J. Torget, provide possible answers to the shifting loyalties of Valley voters during this critical period of American history.² The contributors to this volume above all demonstrate the complexity of state politics and great confusion about which way to turn. Their deeply divided loyalties are clearly demonstrated in their voting patterns in the November 1860 presidential election. Andrew J. Torget, whose essay “Slavery, Politics, and Secession in the Valley of Virginia” headlines the book, clearly demonstrates that while there was indeed clear divisiveness among Valley voters just before the start of the Civil War, there was a stronger sense of unity that made the decision ultimately to support secession fairly easy when the time came.³

Torget demonstrates that Augusta and other Valley residents had a strong commitment to the institution of slavery. Indeed, slavery was integral to the agricultural economy of Rockingham, Augusta, and Rockbridge Counties. Between them, they had more than fourteen million dollars invested in their collective slave workforce and managed more than twenty-six million dollars worth of developed farmlands on the eve of the Civil War. Agriculture based on slavery was the mainstay of the region’s economy and prosperity and there was a widespread feeling that the collapse of slavery would bring economic ruin to the three counties.⁴ This strong deeply-felt commitment to slavery would ultimately tip the balance in favor of secession.

Lincoln’s election divided Valley opinions into three camps: unconditional unionists who believed in the necessity of preserving the Union at all cost; ardent secessionists who saw Lincoln’s victory as an immediate threat to the future of slavery in Virginia; and conditional unionists who were distrustful of Lincoln, but who saw greater risk to the future of slavery if they seceded from the Union. Conditional unionists held the balance of power because they outnumbered the two other groups. If they were to abandon the Union, then strong support for secession would overwhelm the unconditional unionists.⁵

The key to the pro-unionist stance of the conditional unionists was the institution of slavery. They felt that the Constitution recognized and protected the institution of slavery. The fate of slavery was an issue that would be determined by each state in the Union and they felt that that federal government had no right to dictate how each state treated slavery. Leaving the Union, however, would ensure the end of any constitutional protection of slavery. If Virginia were to secede, surely there would be a very bloody civil war that Virginia and the South could well



lose. Defeat would mean a probable invasion by Union military forces from the North who would surely free all slaves under their jurisdiction. Secession therefore would mean an end to slavery while staying in the Union would mean the long-term preservation of that institution. It thus seemed more prudent to stay within the protective web of the Union than to chance fate with the new Confederacy.

Staunton's *Spectator* urged voters not to support pro-secessionist Democrat John Breckinridge in the 1860 election. "To break up the Government under these circumstances simply because Lincoln should be elected would be adding madness to treason. – The danger is in the Cotton states, and not in the North." Rockingham's *Valley Democrat* cautioned against supporting Breckinridge: "Slavery institutions are in no peril. Congress cannot force or reject slavery against the will of the people." Nothing could do more to endanger the future of slavery than to leave the Union, thus guaranteeing a bloody civil war that would end life as they knew and loved it in Virginia. As the Rockbridge *Valley Star* cried: "Never, never let it be said that the Bolters had ever a resting place among us. We want a majority that will silence forever the cry of Disunion."⁶

John Baldwin, one of Augusta County's delegates to the convention in Richmond called to debate the question of secession in early 1861 summarized the conditional unionist stand when he said:

There is but one single subject of complaint which Virginia has to make against the government under which we live, and that is on the subject of African slavery....As a Southern man, as a slaveholder in Virginia, I can never consent that this great interest, this great interest of the South, shall be placed under the ban of government.

Baldwin's fellow delegate from Augusta, Alexander H. H. Stuart, reinforced this sentiment when he told the convention that secession would only lead to war, the emancipation of slaves, and bankruptcy for all in the Valley.⁷

These sentiments were firmly echoed in the November 1860 election. Valley voters overwhelmingly opposed pro-secessionist candidate John Breckinridge and voted heavily for pro-Union candidates Stephen Douglas and John Bell. Rockingham County gave seventy-eight percent of its votes to Bell and Douglas, a clear rejection of all sectional candidates.⁸

Valley newspapers saw added protection in the South's power in the federal government. An Augusta newspaper reassured its readers: "They have the Executive, but no other branch of Government, and will, conse-



quently, be impotent for mischief.... however much disposed they may be to do so." The great danger would be if most if not all of the other states of the South seceded, because that would leave Virginia at the mercy of a "Black Republican majority in Congress."⁹

These assurances that staying in the Union would best protect Virginia, however, gradually began to fade in the early weeks of 1861. The rapid secession of the states of the lower South meant that the South had less and less influence in Washington while the Republican allies of Lincoln gained ascendancy. There came a growing uneasiness among Valley leaders that the departure of much of the South from the Union would leave Virginia's fate to the whims of Lincoln and his cohorts. For a while there was the hope that some compromise solution could be found. Kentucky Senator John Crittenden, for example, offered a compromise proposal that would permit the expansion of slavery into southern portions of the regions recently acquired from Mexico. The failure of this or any other compromise solution to gain any traction led to increased nervousness in the Valley.

Despite this growing apprehension, however, when elections were held in February 1861, for delegates to a state convention to debate and decide what to do concerning the question of secession, Unionist candidates won huge majorities across the Valley. Augusta County voters, for example, gave Unionist candidates a resounding majority of eighty-seven percent of the votes. Augusta voters, however, were even outdone by those in Rockbridge County, who gave Unionist candidates well over ninety percent of the votes.

The Unionists, however, predicated their opposition to secession on the peaceful resolution to the growing crisis between the North and South. Any resort to force by federal authorities to enforce their will would end their tacit support and force them to endorse secession. Lincoln's inaugural speech in early March 1861, only added to the tension. Lincoln promised not to interfere with slavery in areas where it already existed, but he firmly denied the right of any state to secede, and he promised to "hold, occupy and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imports" of the Federal government in all states.

This kind of talk suggested to Valley voters that Lincoln ultimately would use military force to maintain its authority over the South. If he were willing to do that, what would stop an all-out Northern invasion of Virginia that would lead to the abolition of slavery? There was a rapidly growing fear that the new Republican government in Washington was deliberately moving the nation to civil war by refusing to even consider any



of the compromises then up for debate. If Virginia were still part of the Union, there would be nobody to protect them, but the new Confederate government promised to protect them. By late March 1861, it seemed more prudent to seek the protection of the Confederacy than to trust the intentions of the new Lincoln administration.

It is often suggested that it took the commencement of hostilities at Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for 75,000 men to defend the Union in mid- and late-April triggered Virginia's decision to secede. It is true that in the immediate aftermath of Fort Sumter there were well-attended meetings in Rockingham, Augusta, and Rockbridge Counties where attendees called for immediate secession. But by late March newspapers in these counties had already stopped publishing pro-Union statements and were rapidly tilting in favor of joining the Confederacy. By then the conditional unionists no longer felt secure as members of the Union.

By May Valley voters showed overwhelming support for secession and when the Confederacy began to build its army, two-thirds of eligible men in the Valley elected to fight for the Confederacy.¹⁰ Valley soldiers fought hard for the South and support for the Confederate cause was as strong in Staunton and the Valley as it was anywhere else in Virginia.

It is thus clear that most of the voters in Augusta and neighboring counties were never fervent supporters of the Union despite their opposition to secessionist candidates. Their concern was the protection of their own self-interests including slavery. They calculated early on that their interests were best protected by remaining in the Union, but later in 1861 when they began to see the federal government as a threat rather than a protector, their lukewarm conditional unionism very quickly evaporated in favor of secession.

Endnotes

¹ Aaron Sheehan-Dean, "It is Old Virginia and We Must Have It" in Edward L. Ayers, Gary W. Gallagher, and Andrew J. Torget, Eds., *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia from Secession to Commemoration* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 68-70.

² Edward L. Ayers, Gary W. Gallagher, and Andrew J. Torget, Eds., *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia from Secession to Commemoration* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

³ Andrew J. Torget, "Slavery, Politics and Secession in the Valley of Virginia" in Ayers et. al Eds, *op. cit.*, 9-34.

⁴ Torget, 14-15

⁵ Torget, 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 17

¹⁰ Sheehan-Dean, 69.



The West Virginia story

by Bobby L. Arrington

Editor's Note: Bobby L. Arrington was born in Huntington, WV, and completed the four-year certificate of study at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1986. He currently lives in Philadelphia and maintains a website called "West Virginia, the Other History" at <http://sites.google.com/site/wvotherhistory/home>.

On January 14, 1861, the General Assembly of Virginia passed a bill for a special convention to meet on February 13. Elections were held on February 4 and 152 delegates were chosen. Of these delegates forty-nine represented the fifty counties that would become West Virginia.¹ Of the 152 delegates approximately one-fourth advocated immediate secession from the United States.² Most did not express an opinion either way, and another minority consisted of unconditional Unionists, many from northwestern Virginia.

Almost all historians end their story of the West Virginia delegation in Richmond shortly after April 17, the day the Ordinance of Secession was passed, which is equivalent to stopping the story of Gettysburg on July 2. There was still a little more to come. Typical of this treatment is William A. Link's *Roots of Secession*, which represents the West Virginians as solid Unionists who left Richmond directly after the ordinance was passed.³ It is true that a minority number of the Unionist delegates left the convention shortly after the passage of the ordinance, but most of the western Virginia delegates stayed to the end of the convention on May 1, and then attended the later adjourned sessions.⁴ Most of the West Virginia delegates were more closely aligned with the views of Jubal Early than they were with John Carlile.

George W. Summers of Kanawha was the most prominent West Virginia delegate. He had served in the House of Delegates and had been elected to the U.S. Congress. In 1851 he was defeated for the governorship of Virginia by another West Virginian, Joseph Johnston.⁵ He voted against the ordinance on April 17 and stayed to the end of the convention, but eventually resigned his seat. Summers had been invited to Washington during the convention by Abraham Lincoln, but had asked John B. Baldwin of Augusta to go in his stead. The results of Baldwin's meeting with Lincoln were not productive. Summers re-



Allen T. Caperton

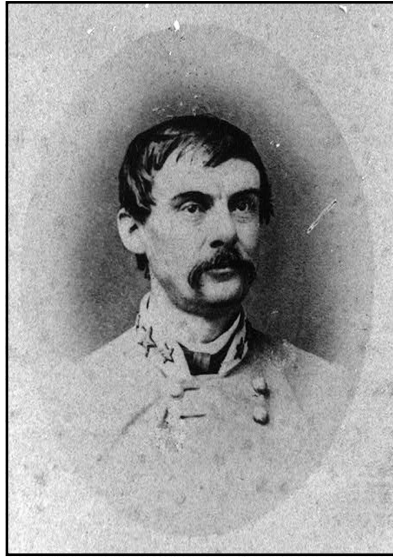


John S. Carlile

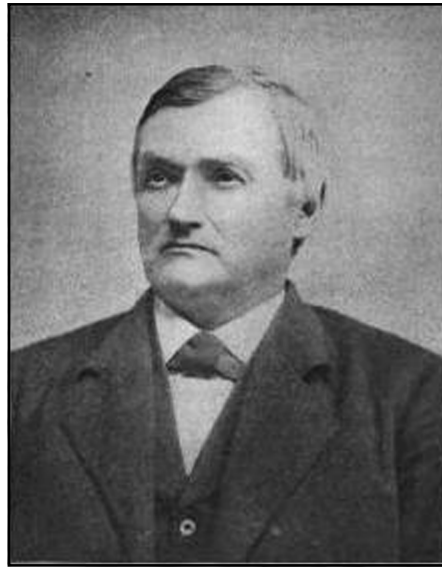
turned to his home in Charleston after the convention and maintained a neutral attitude to the turmoil around him. He warned Gen. McClellan that any Union troops that he sent into the Kanawha Valley would be treated as enemies by the residents, and this delayed the Union advance on Charleston by a month, during which time Generals Henry Wise and John Floyd were able to gather their forces. The Wheeling Unionists viewed him as a traitor, and though he eventually made peace with some, others remained unforgiving.⁶

John Carlile of Harrison was the most stalwart of the Unionists. He had been elected to the State Senate in 1847 and was a U.S. Congressman from 1855-1857. He was the leading spirit of the statehood movement. He left Richmond a few days after April 17, returning to Clarksburg from which he organized Unionist meetings. Harrison County, however, was not the Unionist bastion generally believed,⁷ and Unionist efforts were moved to Wheeling. He later abandoned the statehood movement and to the chagrin of the Wheeling government used his position as a U.S. Senator from Virginia to sabotage the statehood bill.⁸

Waitman T. Willey of Monongalia was another prominent Unionist, though his Unionist colleagues viewed him as being too accommodating to secessionists. At the 1st Wheeling Convention that May he made his famous "triple treason" speech in which he stated that dividing the state amounted to treason against the United States, Virginia, and the Confederacy, which even further eroded his Unionist cre-



John Echols

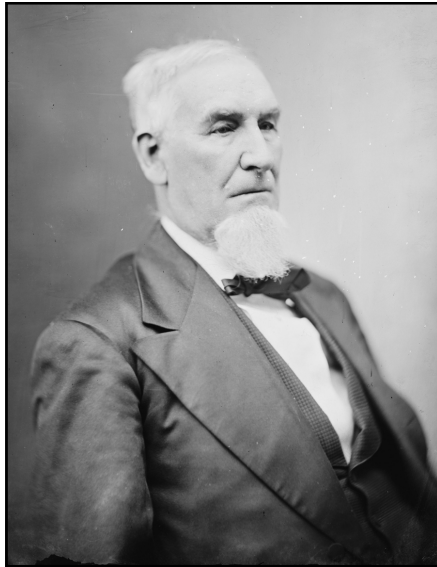


Alpheus F. Haymond

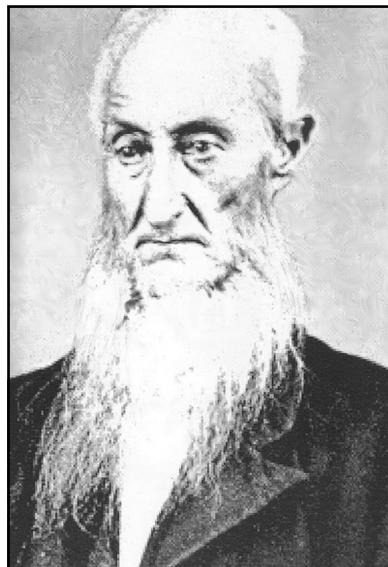
dentials.⁹ However, on John Carlile's abandonment of the statehood movement, Willey moved into the vacuum and with greater Unionist resolution. He was not a delegate to the Second Wheeling Convention, but was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Wheeling, which convened on Nov. 26, 1861.

The Richmond Convention met on February 13 and moderates were able to hold their ground through the vote on April 4, when secession was rejected by a vote of 88 to 45. Of the forty-five secession votes six were from West Virginia: Samuel Woods of Barbour, Leonard S. Hall of Wetzel, William P. Cecil and Samuel L. Graham of McDowell (as well as Tazewell and Buchanan), James Lawson of Boone, Logan, and Wyoming, and Franklin P. Turner of Jackson and Roane. All others voted against the bill. Sherrard Clemens of Ohio was absent. A mass meeting in Jackson County on April 1 had urged Virginia's immediate secession from the Union. Similar meetings were held in Wetzel, Cabell, and Boone counties.¹⁰

There were several issues which in some ways united the West Virginia delegates across the spectrum—secessionist, Unionist, and undecided. Those issues were the unfair taxation system on slaves, and the defense of western Virginia in the case of war. Both sides spoke with great concern regarding the expanse of undefended border in the northwest and the lack of arms to defend it. Some eastern delegates were reluctant to send arms west as they did not trust the western populace.



Samuel Price

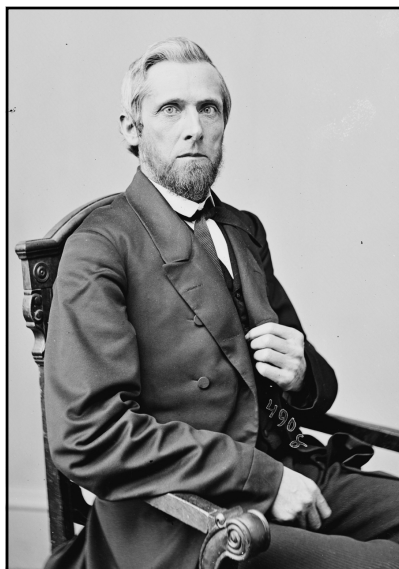


Burwell Spurlock

The scarcity of arms in the west was to have great consequences, as not only were companies of soldiers turned away for lack of equipment,¹¹ but those regiments that had been formed were painfully short of arms. John Floyd had to appeal to the governors of South Carolina and Georgia for weapons¹² and Henry Wise begged for arms captured after the battle of Manassas.¹³ Col. Rutherford B. Hayes wrote in his diary of the weapons used by west Virginians: "The men all laugh at 'squirrel guns' and the wounds they make. Several would have been killed if shot in the same part by the conical balls of our military guns."¹⁴

On March 7, 1861, William G. Brown of Preston introduced the question of the tax inequity on slaves that gave slaveholders an unfair tax advantage over small farmers and ordinary citizens, particularly in western Virginia. The question was re-introduced by Waitman T. Willey of Monongalia on March 18. Both were Unionists, but on this issue they found common ground with western secessionist delegates, or those who would eventually support secession. Benjamin Wilson of Harrison, Allen T. Caperton of Monroe, Cyrus Hall of Pleasants, and Ritchie, and Samuel Woods of Barbour would all support secession, though here they supported Willey and Brown. Caperton, however, favored postponing the taxation issue until a later date.¹⁵

On April 12, 1861, Fort Sumter, South Carolina, was fired upon, and on April 16 the Convention went into secret session. A message from Gov. Letcher was read to the delegates saying that President Lincoln



Waitman T. Willey



Samuel Woods

wanted 2,340 militiamen from Virginia to help put down the rebellion.

On April 17 another vote was held and this time secession was approved by a vote of eighty-eight to fifty-five. Of the fifty-five nays, thirty-two came from West Virginia delegates. Of the other West Virginia delegates, four were either absent or abstained and thirteen voted in favor of secession. However, by the end of the Second Adjourned Session held in November, a total of twenty-nine delegates from West Virginia had signed the Ordinance of Secession, and twenty had not. Of that twenty, thirteen were expelled for engaging in Unionist activities in Wheeling in May. The remaining seven delegates who neither signed the Ordinance nor participated in the First Wheeling Convention were George W. Summers and Spicer Patrick of Kanawha County, Edmund Pendleton of Berkeley, Caleb Boggess of Lewis, James Couch of Mason, Sherrard Clemens of Ohio, and William McComas of Cabell. William McComas had been silent until April 29 when he offered the following remarks:

"I offer the following resolution: 'Resolved, That the Military Committee be instructed to inquire into the most expeditious mode for arming the counties on the Western border line of this State.' " Cabell County sat on the Ohio River just at the Kentucky border.

Some of the most ardent Unionist delegates met at Sherrard Clemens' room at the Powhatan Hotel on April 20. John Carlile had left Richmond the day before. Those assembled decided that they would



return to their homes and organize resistance to the Ordinance. According to Granville Davisson Hall, they left the following day, Sunday.

"I do not now remember the names of all who were in this party, but I do remember W. T. Willey and his wife, Chester D. Hubbard, James Burley, George McC. Porter, Campbell Tarr, Caleb Boggess. William G. Brown, Marshall M. Dent, John J. Jackson, Chapman J. Stuart, and, I think, John S. Burdett, and myself."¹⁶ Mr. Hall was not a delegate.

Jubal Early spoke on April 25 in regard to some of the western delegates who left the Convention:

Sir, I have felt some temptation myself to leave this Convention. I have an aged father living within thirteen miles of the Ohio, with some thirty or forty negroes, and in the most exposed portion of that region, and the question presented itself to me whether it was my duty to go to his assistance rather than stay here to perform my duty. I can understand the feelings which may actuate gentlemen of this Convention who have their wives and children living unprotected in these exposed positions, and I do think they are entitled to some forbearance...we have not now a soldier in all the valley of the Kanawha. In the North-west, they have not arms to arm a company, and there is no means of communicating with the people there, or sending them arms.

On the next to last day of the convention, April 30, a debate arose over the introduction of an ordinance by Scott of Powhatan concerning the distribution of arms to the Kanawha Valley and the counties bordering Ohio and Pennsylvania. Leonard S. Hall of Wetzel, Benjamin Wilson of Harrison and Franklin Turner of Jackson and Roane all appealed for arms for their regions. Turner said "...I will state that there are now cooped within one and half hour's run of Ohio by steamboat, in the town of Ravenswood and Jackson Court House, over four hundred slaves, which are liable at any moment to be carried off. The county is entirely defenseless, being without any arms, except the common rifles in the hands of farmers. We have an organized volunteer company in the county, for which I have been in vain applying for arms for the last three or four weeks." His words were prophetic. In July the towns of Ripley and Ravenswood in Jackson County were taken by McClellan's soldiers, over eighty citizens were arrested in Ripley alone and county officials replaced by Wheeling appointees.¹⁷ Escaped slaves from western Virginia began filling towns across the river in Ohio.¹⁸ Benjamin Wilson himself would soon be under arrest.



The four men who were absent or abstained on April 17 all signed the Ordinance. Thomas Maslin of Hardy County was the presiding judge of the county court and had been in court that day. He stayed in office during the war, though the last meeting of the court took place March 3, 1862. He issued a letter stating that no citizen who obeyed the laws of Virginia had anything to fear.¹⁹ Alfred M. Barbour of Jefferson County was absent due to his being in Harpers Ferry to urge the armory workers to support Virginia's secession. He returned to the convention and recorded his vote in favor.²⁰ Paul McNeil (sometimes spelled McNeel) of Pocahontas was absent but later recorded his vote in favor. He was consulted by Col. William L. Jackson of Parkersburg (later Brig. General) prior to the famous Jones-Imboden raid in 1863, and McNeil's young son John joined Jackson's regiment.²¹ Benjamin Wilson of Harrison had abstained but signed the April copy of the Ordinance and stayed through the Convention. He did not sign the calligraphic June copy of the Ordinance due to his being arrested at his home in Clarksburg by Union authorities in early June, along with other prominent secessionists. He later received a special Presidential pardon.²²

Of the thirty-two delegates who voted against the Ordinance on April 17, twelve changed their minds and signed the Ordinance. They were Edward A. Armstrong of Hampshire, George W. Berlin of Upshur, Benjamin W. Byrne of Braxton, Clay, Nicholas, Webster, and Currence B. Conrad of Calhoun, Gilmer, Wirt, and Allen C. Hammond of Berkeley, Alpheus F. Haymond of Marion, James W. Hoge of Putnam, Henry M. Masters of Pendleton, Logan Osburn of Jefferson, Samuel Price of Greenbrier, David Pugh of Hampshire, and Burwell Spurlock of Wayne. Alpheus Haymond and James W. Hoge served in the Confederate army, as did Benjamin W. Byrne, who served as an enrolling officer in Staunton.²³ Samuel Price became the Lt. Governor of Virginia under the Confederacy. Logan Osburn declared "My lot has been cast. I am a son of Virginia, and her destiny shall be mine. I will return to the Convention to aid in faithfully carrying out the provisions of the Ordinance..."²⁴ Henry M. Masters of Pendleton "acquiesced in the will of the majority. He fed many soldiers at his home in Franklin."²⁵ David Pugh was "faithful... to his state and the cause which she espoused." Currence B. Conrad, who had been appointed Brig. General of the 20th Brigade of State militia, was arrested by Union authorities after McClellan invaded west Virginia.²⁶



Of the thirteen delegates who voted in favor of the Ordinance on April 17, Samuel Woods of Barbour served in the Confederate army as a member of the Stonewall Brigade.²⁷ Allen T. Caperton of Monroe served in the Confederate Congress,²⁸ and John Echols of Monroe became a Brigadier-General in the Confederate Army.²⁹ Franklin P. Turner of Jackson and Roane served as a captain in the Confederate army.³⁰ John N. Hughes of Randolph was killed taking a message to Col. Pegram at Rich Mountain, mistaken for a Unionist.³¹ Leonard S. Hall was a state delegate for Wetzel County in the Virginia General Assembly from 1863-1865.³² Napoleon B. French commanded a company of cavalry in the Confederate army.³³ William P. Cecil and Samuel L. Graham both served in the Confederate army.³⁴ Johnson Orrick of Morgan became a captain in the Confederate army. He died of wounds he received in Maryland in June of 1863.³⁵

One of the more interesting reversals was that of the Reverend Burwell Spurlock of Wayne. He voted against the Ordinance on April 4 and April 17, but remained in convention. On April 29, Spurlock opened the Convention with a prayer. In late August of 1861, his name began appearing in newspapers from Ohio to New York. The *New York Times* reported on Sept. 1 the following:

Yesterday (Sunday) morning, a detachment of 54 men, from Col. ZEIGLER's regiment, under Capt. SMITH, took possession of the Wayne Court-house, and captured 13 prisoners. BURWELL SPURLOCK, ADKINS, Clerk of the Court, and a Methodist preacher by the name of JOHNSON, are said to have been taken, A.J. MILLER was shot dead by one of the Tug Fork men, as he was attempting to escape. This MILLER, the preacher, and SPURLOCK, have been the rebel leaders, and chief mischief-makers, since FURGUSON's arrest by ZEIGLER.

Spurlock's son Hurston, later captain of Company E, 16th Virginia Cavalry, was also captured and sent to prison in Wheeling.³⁶ The Reverend Spurlock must have been released, either on oath or bond, or perhaps because of his age. In any event, November found him in Richmond applying pen and ink to the bottom of the Ordinance of Secession. His name appears just under that of John Echols of Monroe, the bottom of the last column on the right. He was among the last to sign the Ordinance.

After the delegates signed the April copy of the Ordinance, a formal copy was ordered for signing, and William Flegenheimer drew the new document, which was presented to the convention for signing on June 14 at the 1st Adjourned Session. This copy was stolen by a Union



soldier named Charles W. Bullis in 1865, but was returned to Virginia in 1929 and is in the Library of Virginia.

If you look at the calligraphic Ordinance, this is how the names appear, starting at the first column at the left, reading from top to bottom, the names appear in this order:

Column 1: Edward Armstrong, Johnson Orrick, Logan Osburn, Samuel Woods, Henry

Gillespie, Samuel Graham

Column 2: Alfred Barbour, Benjamin Byrne, James W. Hoge

Column 3: Allen Caperton, W.P. Cecil, C.B. Conrad, Samuel Price, James Lawson,

Thomas Maslin

Column 4: Napoleon French, Cyrus Hall, David Pugh, Henry M. Masters

Column 5: John N. Hughes, G.W. Berlin, Franklin Turner

Column 6: Leonard Hall, Allen C. Hammond, Alpheus Haymond, Paul McNeil, John

Echols, Burwell Spurlock³⁷

As mentioned before, Benjamin Wilson's signature appears only on the April copy of the Ordinance, as he was under arrest in June.

Postscript

An irony lay in the very success of the Wheeling Unionist government. At great odds they had secured a large part of Virginia for their new state of West Virginia, but they had taken more of Virginia than they could handle. They recognized this danger early-on when delegate James H. Brown of Kanawha addressed the Constitutional Convention in Wheeling on Dec. 4, 1861: When this Constitution will be in operation and a man is convicted of treason, then he is within the prohibition and must be excluded from the right of suffrage. But we will find the number to exclude will be almost legion."³⁸

They managed to stay in power for six years after the war, until 1871, when the laws of ex-Confederate disfranchisement collapsed, with a helpful push from Judge John J. Jackson, Jr., son of the Richmond Convention delegate from Wood County.³⁹ The state constitution, which Waitman T. Willey had imagined would guide West Virginia for generations, was rejected by a public referendum in 1871. In 1872 a new Constitutional Convention met with seventy-eight delegates, and with many familiar names associated with the Richmond Convention. Chairing the Convention was Samuel Price of Greenbrier, former Confederate Lt. Governor of Virginia. Allen T. Caperton, Samuel Woods, Benjamin W.



Byrne, Alpheus Haymond, Logan Osburn, Thomas Maslin, Benjamin Wilson, all of whom had signed the Ordinance of Secession, were members. Two of the former Unionists were also present, Waitman T. Willey and William G. Brown. These last two men were part of a group nicknamed The Twelve Apostles, being the only twelve Republicans elected to the convention. The new constitution was approved by public vote, a vote very different from the one that had approved the Wheeling constitution. A slim majority of the over 80,000 votes cast approved the new constitution, in contrast to the 18,676 votes cast in 1862.⁴⁰

Allen T. Caperton became the first ex-Confederate elected to the United States Senate. He was followed in that office by Samuel Price. Samuel Woods and Alpheus Haymond would become justices on West Virginia's Supreme Court.⁴¹ Benjamin Wilson served as a U.S. Congressman and assistant Attorney General of the United States. The Unionists who created the state saw their political careers suddenly terminated. Waitman T. Willey became a clerk of the county court.⁴² Arthur Boreman, the first Governor of West Virginia, originally from Pennsylvania, served out his term as U.S. Senator and was replaced by Allen T. Caperton. Boreman left politics and resumed his legal career in Parkersburg.⁴³ Francis H. Pierpont, called by some the Father of West Virginia, served one term in the House of Delegates and then lost re-election and retired from political life. By the elections of 1876, six of the seven successful candidates for high office were Confederate veterans.⁴⁴

Endnotes

¹ Charles Henry Ambler, *A History of West Virginia*, (Prentice-Hall, 1933), 309, notes 30-33. Ambler named forty-seven delegates but missed William P. Cecil and Samuel L. Graham, who represented McDowell County, W.Va., as well as Buchanan and Tazewell Counties, Va. See William C. Pendleton's *A History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia* (Richmond, 1920), 600, 603.

² Benjamin J. Hillman (ed.), *Virginia's Decision, The Story of the Secession Convention of 1861*, (Richmond, Virginia Civil War Commission, 1964), 6.

³ William A. Link, *Roots of Secession, Slavery and Politics in Antebellum Virginia*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 43-244.

⁴ Virginia Memory, Library of Virginia. All references to votes and signatures in this essay come from this website. This website details the votes and signatures of the Convention delegates. http://www.virginiamemory.com/docs/votes_on_secession.pdf.

⁵ Ken Sullivan, *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, (Charleston: West Virginia Humanities Council, 2006), 691-692.

⁶ Granville Davisson Hall, *The Rending of Virginia*, 548-562.

⁷ Dorothy Davis, "Harrison County Election of May 23, 1861." A tabulation of most of the poll books show support for secession at fifty percent. A few books were missing containing about 300 votes. <http://scenicwv.org/sketches/Election%20May%2023,%201861.pdf>.

⁸ Sullivan, *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, 112.



- ⁹ Virgil Lewis, *How West Virginia Was Made*, (News-Mail Co., 1909), 58.
- ¹⁰ James C. McGregor, *The Disruption of Virginia*, (Macmillan, 1922), 147, note 2.
- ¹¹ Robert White, *Confederate Military History*, extended edition, Vol. III, (West Virginia, Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1987), 15.
- ¹² Jed Hotchkiss, *Confederate Military History*, Volume III: Virginia, Confederate Publishing Co., 1899, 60.
- ¹³ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume V (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881), 778.
- ¹⁴ *The Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes, Nineteenth President of the United States*, Vol. 2, Charles Williams, Charles R., ed., (Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society, 1922), 63.
- ¹⁵ William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson, *Showdown in Virginia, The 1861 Convention and the Fate of the Union*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 138-144.
- ¹⁶ Granville D. Hall, *The Rending of Virginia*, (Mayer & Miller, 1901), 530.
- ¹⁷ *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume II, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), 214.
- ¹⁸ "The War in Western Virginia," *The New York Times*, October 6, 1862.
- ¹⁹ Stephen G. Smith, Secession, "War and Rebirth: The Civil War in West Virginia's South Branch Valley of the Potomac," Doctoral thesis, 2000, West Virginia University, 52, 54, 73.
- ²⁰ William H. Gaines, Jr., *Biographical Register of Members, Virginia State Convention of 1861, First Session* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1969), 15. Hereinafter cited as "Biographical Register."
- ²¹ Southern Historical Society papers, Volumes 34-35, Virginia Historical Society, 1906, 294-312.
- ²² Granville D. Hall, *The Rending of Virginia*, 155 and James L. Douthat, *Special Presidential Pardons for Confederate Soldiers* (Mountain Press, 1999).
- ²³ *Biographical Register*, 44, 23.
- ²⁴ Millard K. Bushong, *A History of Jefferson County, West Virginia, 1719-1940*, 103.
- ²⁵ Oren F. Morton, *A History of Pendleton County*, 1910, 255.
- ²⁶ James Carter Linger, *Confederate Military Units of West Virginia*, 2002 ed., 17.
- ²⁷ *Biographical Register*, 82.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 42.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 35.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 26, 38.
- ³⁵ Charles Triplett O'Farrell, *Forty Years of Active Service*, (Neale Publishing Co., 1904), 76 and Margaret Du Pont Lee, *Virginia Ghosts* (Virginia Book Co., 1966), 237.
- ³⁶ Jack L. Dickinson, *Wayne County, West Virginia, in the Civil War*, (Higginson Book Co., 2003), 79.
- ³⁷ Encyclopedia Virginia, a high resolution copy of the calligraphic version of the Ordinance of Secession drawn by William Flegenheimer.
- ³⁸ http://www.encyclopediaivirginia.org/media_player?mets_filename=evm00002658mets.xml and Debates and Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of West Virginia December 4, 1861. <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/cc120461.html>.
- ³⁹ Mark A. Snell, *West Virginia and the Civil War*, (History Press, 2011).28. The current estimation of West Virginia's Confederate soldiery is 20,000-22,000, and about the same number for Union soldiery.
- ⁴⁰ Ambler, *A History of West Virginia*, 370.
- ⁴¹ James Moreton Callahan, *A Semi-centennial History of West Virginia*, (Semi-Centennial Commission of West Virginia, 1913), 172-182.
- ⁴² *The Green Bag, An Entertaining Magazine for Lawyers*, (Boston Book Co., 1902), Vol. 12, 211, 292.
- ⁴³ George W., Atkinson, *Bench and Bar of West Virginia*, (Virginia Law Book Co., 1919), 22.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.



Making history come alive: Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & immersive exhibitions

by Beth Huffer

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Public history sites play an important role as tangible locations of historical significance. In this way, learning about the battle of Gettysburg as a series of dots on a map inside a classroom is a different experience than walking the grounds where the battle occurred. A visit to the setting of historical events allows the visitor to engage personally with the subject matter, creating a three-dimensional experience in lieu of words in a textbook. Increasingly, public history sites are endeavoring to enhance this experience through immersive exhibitions, a constructed way to make history “come alive” and put the visitor in the middle of the action. A local institution of public history, the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library (WWPL), opened its own immersive exhibition in 2010 and I argue its aim is to enrich their museum galleries and broaden their visitor base, redirecting the institutional focus to the educational component of their mission. In this way, the immersive exhibit is a tool to engage the public, especially younger visitors, with the history of Wilson’s lifetime.

As the role of the museum has changed in society during the past few centuries, so too have the exhibition strategies used to educate visitors. In order to best understand immersive exhibits as a form of museum communication, it is beneficial to begin with a general discussion of museum exhibits as educational strategies, then to narrow our focus to immersive exhibits and their connection to the WWPL and the larger question about interpretation of public history sites.

In 2000, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill posits in her significant work “Changing Values in the Art Museum: Rethinking Communication



and Learning,” that “today we are witnessing an enormous cultural change,” that makes “museums...subject to diverse demands to enable them to play valid roles in new worlds.”¹ In this way, Hooper-Greenhill points out that “museums are challenged today to justify their existence,” and that it is imperative to “think more analytically about the experience that is offered to visitors” as a means to understand their role in society as a “communicator” of information, ideas, and concepts.² Hooper-Greenhill terms the “modern museum” in her writing as the leading museum institutional model until the last twenty-five years of the twentieth century, when enlightenment ideas of self-improvement and civic celebration dominated. The communicative aim of museums within this model is “to enlighten and to educate, to lay out knowledge for the visitor such that it may be absorbed.”³ As an educational strategy, this is the “transmission mode of communication” and it invokes “a linear process of information-transfer from an authoritative source to a uniformed receiver.”⁴ In reference to museum exhibitions, the transmission model sets up visitors as “empty vessels to be filled”⁵ with the understanding of the content expert (the curator) without any thought given to the pre-existing knowledge of the visitors or even the identity of their target audience.

As society moves into a new century, the past models of museum exhibition strategies and education, mainly the transmission model, have been challenged and institutions have developed new and innovative strategies in its place. Hooper-Greenhill focuses on the cultural approach to communication, which concentrates on how meaning is constructed. Although her article focuses on the interpretation of art, her argument applies more broadly to museum displays, as visitors to all museums bring individual preconceptions based on their history and culture background, which, affect the relationship between visitor and exhibit. Although Hooper-Greenhill wrote her article ten years ago, the argument that museums should re-think their exhibition development, placing an emphasis on the visitor and the process of learning, is still extremely relevant today. Museums strive to engage visitors in their collections through collaboration while moving farther away from the transmission communication model.

Immersive exhibits are exhibition strategies that break out of the modern museum idea of communication. It is useful to begin with a definition of the term “immersive exhibition” as it will be central in the following pages. In a 1998 article in the American Asso-



ciation of Museums publication *Museum News*, Jane and Ed Bedno share their vision for the future of exhibitions in museums and include a helpful section on, what they term, immersion exhibitions:

To control the flow of visitors through an immersive space, Disney developed the concept of the “ride through” in which visitors are conducted through the exhibition in a moving vehicle. Virtually all aspects of this type of exhibition are under the control of the presenter – space, path, time, sound, smell, information, number of visitors. This kind of totally immersive experience has been utilized in museums outside the United States – for example, at the Jorvik Viking Centre in York, England – but it is not yet seen beyond the commercial sector here. Semi-controlled immersion has been particularly effective when used to convey a setting with strong emotional aspects...Future exhibitions will certainly put more visitors inside immersive environments.⁶

Also, one can look to zoos to get a sense as to what, as the Saint Louis Zoo terms, an immersion exhibit is:

An immersion exhibit is a lushly planted naturalistic environment that gives visitors the sense they’re actually in the animals’ habitats. Buildings and barriers are hidden. By recreating as many sights and sounds as possible from natural environments, immersion exhibits provide an exciting experience and educate visitors about how animals live in the wild.⁷

Although these two definitions differ, they have several elements in common that help construct a description of immersive exhibitions in museums. I define immersive exhibitions as exhibits where technological components, made using varying levels of technology, including sounds, images, and video, are combined with intentional construction of the physical elements of the exhibit space, such as dramatic lighting, a directed exhibit path, and historic replicas in order to create a setting that transports visitors away from reality. In this way, immersive exhibition elements engage the visitors’ senses to take them on a journey.

As seen in the Bedno’s article, theme park-esque elements are heavily associated with this type of exhibition and, as will be shown, the association is not always favorable. The world of public history is no stranger to controversy, as the introduction of new narratives and new types of museums have stirred up their share of media attention.⁸ One of the most high-profile controversies of the 1990s was Disney’s attempt to build an American history theme park, called Disney’s America, in northern Virginia. There were many issues at stake in the arguments





for and against the theme park, the most relevant being the polarization that took place between historians over the question of how history should be or could be interpreted for the general public.⁹ As historian Cary Carson put it, “The Disney Company’s sudden appearance on the borders of our history museum kingdom was the best thing to happen to American history since [Roots author] Alex Haley.”¹⁰ In this way, scholars such as Cindy Aron began asking foundational questions of their profession, such as “Who owns the past and who has the right to interpret it?” as well as “What is the role and function of collective memory?”¹¹

On November 11, 1993, Disney unveiled its plan to build a 3,000-acre American history park in Prince William County of Virginia, about six miles west of Manassas and thirty minutes from Washington, D.C. Speculation about how Disney would portray American history events became central to inquiries about the project and according to the *Newport News Daily Press*, the “exhibits would include a re-enactment on a manmade lake of the battle of the Civil War ironclads, *Monitor* and *Merrimack*, and a hall of presidents, perhaps with re-enactments of famous debates between them.”¹² Media outlets also emphasized that Disney would use virtual reality to put visitors in the moment of history, “Disney also would incorporate ‘virtual reality’ technology in some displays: for example, to simulate the experience of traveling with explorers Lewis and Clark, or of flying a World War II-era warplane.”¹³ The project, originally set to cost \$500 million, drew support from local Virginian politicians as Disney’s America would generate revenue and thousands of jobs for area residents. However, opponents of the new theme park not only criticized its high price tag, but also the fact that the park would have no authentic objects and would not be able to give visitors the same experience as a site of public history. In response, *USA TODAY* reported that “only 8% of visitors to historic sites cite authenticity as the major reason for coming; 43% say they choose these destinations because they’re entertaining.”¹⁴

In response to the proposal, there was a large protest from heritage and preservation groups against the proximity of the park to the Manassas Civil War battlefields. At that time, as Marcia Synnott chronicles, “a broad coalition, each of whose members [had] its own agenda, raised widespread concern about the potential impact of the 3,000-acre site.”¹⁵ The prime concern was the park’s potential impact on Virginian heritage and historic sites. The coalition believed, much like Princeton history professor James McPherson, that if Disney’s America was built in the rural Prince William County, that “urban sprawl will reach for miles in every direc-



tion, all along the key roads intersecting the region, destroying the character and cheapening the historical attractions.”¹⁶ This issue came to the forefront of the controversy over Disney’s America as the National Trust for Historic Preservation placed the northern Virginia Piedmont area at the head of its 1994 list of America’s Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places. The uproar culminated on September 17, 1994, in a protest on the National Mall that called for the relocation of the site of the theme park or, better yet, for Disney to abandon the project, altogether. As a response, on September 28, 1994, Disney announced that it was re-thinking the site of the project and, for a short while, began to talk about alternative locations for Disney’s America. A new location never materialized. Amid continuing controversy and financial complications with its Euro Disney park, Disney abandoned the historically-themed park a little more than a year after unveiling the plans.

The plans for a Disney history theme park stirred up several issues surrounding preservation of the environment as well as the presentation of American history. Public historians seized this moment of controversy to bring to light concerns regarding who owns the right to publicly interpret history and they took their debate to scholarly publications. The majority of public historians disapproved of the Disney site, but the two sides of the debate were far more ambiguous about the broader question of entertainment’s role in the telling of history.¹⁷ Public history scholars often criticized their own colleagues as being disconnected from the general population and not understanding the public’s interests. These critics also noted that by introducing elements of entertainment to the historian’s restricted academic realm, it would displace the power structure in regard to those who know and those who do not.¹⁸ In this way, one side of the debate saw the introduction of theme park-esque components, such as historical re-creations and audio-visual exhibits, as tools to reach a broader audience and engage a new generation in, as Disney put it, the “magic of history.” The other side of the scholarly debate abhorred the idea of a fanciful depiction of history, including a “Disneyfied” version with a happy ending that is rarely realistic in American history. One of the main academic concerns of this camp was the simplistic nature in which American history would likely be presented by Disney’s America. The rhetoric of the Disney organization did not help dispel this concern as during the company’s lobbying campaign, it disseminated contradicting statements about the nature of the project. Then Disney Vice President Robert Weis



was quoted as saying, “We want to make you feel what it was like to be a slave or what it was like to escape through the underground railroad,” while Eisner was quoted as calling museum exhibitions “boring,” thus contradicting Disney’s willingness to fully embrace historians and the company’s more serious approach to the interpretation of history.¹⁹

Even though the controversy eventually subsided and Disney pulled its history theme park off the table, the scholarly debates raised significant questions about the display of public history. The scale of the controversy, in both academia and the public sphere, demonstrates just how much citizens are stakeholders in the presentation and educational structure of American history. These debates implicate all history museums as sites of contention regarding the question of to what extent entertainment should be used to reach a broader audience or if it trivializes the difficult intricacies of the American narrative.²⁰ Several scholars during the Disney debate kept to the middle ground on the entertainment question, concluding that it is possible to have both an entertaining museum with theatrics while educating the public with a critical analysis of events and facts. To these writers, such as Cindy Aron, leisure and entertainment have always been integrally linked with education and could, in an ideal institution, come together to create the perfect educational mix.²¹

The balance for any site of public history between education and entertainment is often difficult to maintain. To install an immersive exhibition as both a tool for engagement with a younger audience while maintaining its integrity as a scholarly endeavor is certainly a challenge, as indicated by the Disney debate. However, the intentions and mission of an institution are crucial in demarcating between a marketing gimmick and a participatory environment. In this way, one can look to WWPL as a case study for a successful use of an immersive exhibition as a way to engage a new audience in the history of World War I as well as an exciting turn in the history of the organization.

The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library began as the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace Foundation, chartered in June of 1938 as a private non-profit institution. Its incorporation document set forth the Foundation’s purpose:

To purchase, preserve and maintain the property located . . . in the City of Staunton, Virginia, being the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson, together with such adjacent property as may be necessary and requisite





to the purpose and needs of the said corporation, and to secure funds for that purpose and for the restoration and permanent endowment thereof...to the end that the said property may be forever set apart as a National Shrine, dedicated to the aims, ideals and purposes for which Woodrow Wilson lived and died.²²

Wilson's second wife and widow, Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, led the initiative to purchase the historic Presbyterian manse where Woodrow Wilson was born in 1856. The Presbyterian manse acted much like a rectory or parsonage in the nineteenth century, housing the pastors of Staunton's First Presbyterian church, one of whom had been Wilson's father, Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson. In May 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the manse as a house museum and a "new shrine to freedom."²³ The members of the foundation included a group of national leaders, including "Admiral Cary Grayson, Wilson's physician and close friend, leading Democratic Party figures, Mrs. Cordell Hull, a Staunton native and wife of the Secretary of State, Jesse Jones, a Texas financier, and Secretary of Commerce and Virginia Senators Harry F. Byrd and Carter Glass."²⁴ In the 1940s, the organization assembled an endowment to maintain the property, conducted major renovations of the Presbyterian manse, and began giving guided tours of the house. The 1960s and 1970s saw many changes to the institution, including a renovation that returned the manse's internal appearance to 1856, the year Wilson was born there. Other changes included the hiring of professional staff, as well as being recognized as a National Historic Landmark and receiving accreditation from the American Association of Museums. The organization stressed education in the 1980s that led to a capital campaign to construct the addition of the formal museum building that opened in 1990.

Beginning in 1998, the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace Foundation developed a larger sense of mission in the new global community and enlisted experts on the presidential library system for its Board of Trustees. This was the first step in a six-year process in hopes of establishing the historic house and museum complex in Staunton, Virginia, as a presidential library, in an effort to "make the legacy of Woodrow Wilson a central component of national and international discourse."²⁵ The foundation hired the architecture firm Frazier Associates to design and plan the new physical complex of the library while the board studied presidential library models to understand



the process of transforming the site into a presidential library. During these beginning phases, the foundation developed four key elements essential for the establishment of the new presidential library: increasing the Wilson collection, improving access to the Wilson collection, encouraging scholarship, and enriching the visitor experience. These four elements, as outlined in a 2004 prospectus developed by the foundation, will be discussed in detail below.

The foundation's plan for the presidential library included a massive expansion of the birthplace site. The architects researched Wilson, the historic buildings in Staunton, Virginia, and other buildings associated with Wilson's life, such as those at Princeton University. Frazier Associates created a design that would be a mixture of restraint, dignity, and modest scale, not monumental. The design included the historic manse, an expansive library and research center and a museum and visitor orientation building. The museum building of the complex would include 11,000 square feet of exhibit space along with "ample facilities for visiting scholars, staff accommodations, archival storage, electronic and audio-visual capability, and seminar and conference rooms."²⁶ These elaborate plans, according to the 2004 prospectus, would cost \$28.5 million dollars, including a \$6 million endowment to support operating costs. The plan also called for the majority of the funds for the new project to be obtained by 2006 and for the groundbreaking ceremony to occur on December 28, 2006, on Wilson's 150th birthday.

As any 2012 visitor to the WWPL can tell you, the above outlined expansion has not taken place. However, the extremely ambitious project has not been completely thrown by the wayside. The organization effectively changed its name and mission and established itself as the third largest holder of Wilson-related papers, after the Library of Congress and Princeton University. An extensive eLibrary of WWPL's holdings is available online with both transcriptions of documents and images. Here, scholars and school children alike can learn about Wilson's legacy through his own words, while connecting to history on a level never before available. Unfortunately, the funding for the physical expansion did not materialize as planned and is currently on hold. However, WWPL has recently been presented with two opportunities to implement elements of the plan from the 2004 prospectus. The first, an excess of federal funding, has allowed for the addition of new exhibit to the aging exhibition program; this exhibit will be detailed in further



discussion. The second opportunity has been the ability to buy a historic building next to the current complex and retrofit it to become a new Library and Research Center (LARC). This, with a price tag of over \$1 million, was recently completed, and according to the institution's press release, is "an immediate solution for the responsible storage of papers in a state-of-the-art archival storage system, and is large enough to support future acquisitions."²⁷

The past decade saw the institution struggle to grow, both internally and externally, in order to match the promise of the vision set out in the 2004 prospectus while still continuing its local educational outreach and interpretation of the historic manse. The conflict between the two goals has developed into a continuing emphasis on the newly accessioned collection items and the library portion of the institution, effectively neglecting the permanent exhibits housed in the museum. These exhibits, the bulk of which remain unchanged since the opening of the museum building in 1990, have adequately served the purpose of explaining Wilson's life and times while complementing the guided tour of the historic manse as the main tourist activity at the site. These exhibits currently display information on Wilson's parents, his youth, education, two marriages, and, most importantly, his terms in the White House. Of the six galleries, two remain completely unchanged while the rest have been slightly altered over the past two decades. Dr. Katharine L. Brown, the executive director of the organization at the time, wrote the narrative and labels for the entire exhibit in 1990, while Chris White Design Incorporated, based out of Maryland, was contracted to design and fabricate the exhibits. At the time, the exhibition materials were considered sleek and new, including display cases for authentic Wilsonian objects, enlarged images of political cartoons, and a station where one could listen to a recording of several of Wilson's speeches. In addition to the exhibits, Wilson's 1919 Pierce-Arrow car was moved into the newly opened museum building. Visitors could walk around the car and learn about its history from suffering damage while being stored in a garage in Staunton, Virginia, to its two major restorations in the 1970s and 1990s.²⁸

Since 1990, however, this exhibition program has been static with only periodic traveling and temporary exhibits. As the museum itself is situated inside a complex of historic buildings, physical additions to the institution have been non-existent. Over time, WWPL purchased several surrounding historic buildings to house administrative offices and a retail store. This decision was not only more financially practical than



building additions, but it also preserved the historic spirit of the downtown area of Staunton, Virginia. In order to change the spatial configuration within WWPL, the staff would have to shift exhibits, galleries, and offices within the existing space of the museum facility. These limitations have not allowed for the addition of new exhibits to the museum's existing six galleries, but, instead, they have encouraged a casual system of updating and replacing current exhibits. It is no surprise, then, that the museum, which is the most publicly trafficked part of the complex, lacks the modern touches expected of an institution emerging on the national, scholarly stage. As one can expect, the neglect has not been intentional, but the result of both a lack of funding and necessity. The existing exhibits adequately describe Wilson's story with simple text panels and images, rendering a multitude of flashy touch screens, visual effects, or videos unnecessary.

A new exhibition that opened in 2010 resulted from a rare museum occurrence: excess funding. WWPL found itself in an unexpected, but opportunistic, position to add to its existing museum galleries and create a one-of-a-kind experience for its visitors. With the help of their district Congressman Bob Goodlatte, WWPL received a sizeable five-year Congressionally-directed grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2004.²⁹ The organization had five years to employ the funds and have done so mainly through restorations of the interior and exterior of the historic buildings, which houses its museum and offices. During mid-2009, the organization realized it still had \$100,000 of the grant remaining, which needed to be spent before the end of the year. It was decided to use the funding to create an additional exhibit in the museum building, one that would be an attraction and would increase the institution's visibility.

Faced with a time-sensitive funding excess, the staff informally brainstormed ideas to efficiently update their exhibition program. These brainstorming meetings produced the creative solution to use the basement space below the museum building to house a new exhibit focusing on the trench environment present during World War I. Not only was the basement an underutilized space, but it would also provide a perfect, dark, and enclosed environment to provide a simulated and immersive experience for the visitor. The Director of Education, Curator of Collections, and the Director of the Library & Archives formed a World War I Committee to discuss the details of the exhibit; it was decided to contract out the exhibit design to a design firm with the fund-



ing. Three regional design firms submitted proposals to WWPL for the trench exhibit and WWPL chose the firm Riggs Ward from Richmond, Virginia, to design and fabricate the exhibit. According to the former Curator of Collections, Jarod Kearney, the driving thought behind the exhibit design was the desire to create an exhibit that is “interactive and up to modern speed” while remaining in line with the institution’s mission, part of which is to “present to visitors an engaging and educating experience covering Wilson’s life context, his accomplishments and his legacy.”³⁰ The exhibit, as designed by Riggs Ward, would be an immersive experience with war sounds, images, and artifacts, coupled with text panels explaining the chronology of World War I as well as the strategy and weaponry of trench warfare.

To enter the exhibit, visitors first descend a side staircase off the main lobby and foyer area. Once down a flight of stairs and past the title text panel, the visitor enters a hallway filled with World War I artifacts, most of which will be on extended loan from the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. The artifacts are paired with text explaining the events leading up to the war. As the visitor moves through the space, the hallway turns right and leads them into the thick of trench warfare. This portion of the exhibit places the viewer in the bottom of a World War I trench, complete with a soundtrack featuring the sounds of war and a structure built into the space to reconstruct the banked earth of a trench including sandbags and barbed wire. This portion makes the visitor a soldier, moving through a dark, enclosed space filled with simulated gunfire and lets him or her immerse themselves in the experience. The text in this area explains the strategy, structure, and organization of trench warfare and goes on to showcase diagrams, objects, and images of weaponry and artillery of the war. As the viewer moves through the built-up trench, more artifacts with text panels go on to explain the daily life of a soldier, including information about uniforms, meals, and health and medical issues. The exhibit concludes as the visitor exits the U-shaped trench hallway lined with panels explaining the aftermath and devastation of World War I, specifically noting the role Woodrow Wilson played in American leadership during and after the war. In a newspaper article about the new exhibit, reporter Jody Lawrence reveals that the exhibit aims to not only accurately represent general trench warfare, but also specifically references the 1918 Meuse-Argonne Offensive in France which was “the largest campaign involving the United States during the war...[that] ended in



The World War I trench exhibit at the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library is an example of an immersive exhibit. (Photo courtesy of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library)

more than 26,000 U.S. casualties but helped disrupt and destroy support networks for the German forces.”³¹ Don Wilson, President and CEO of WWPL, explains that the exhibit is also meant to “give a feel for what it was like for an average soldier during the war...as well as the contrast from being uprooted from a farm in the [Shenandoah] Valley and transplanted in Europe.”³² Historian and part-time consultant to WWPL, William Walker, has been charged with writing much of the captions and text for the new exhibit and has, himself, “been to the battle sites in France several times, most recently in March [2009], and has done a great deal of research” to accurately describe the offensive efforts, trench warfare, and role of the United States in World War I. Together, the sights, sounds, and text of the exhibit are a marked departure from the static, chronological exhibition program present in the museum’s other galleries and is indeed “up to modern speed” in providing visitors with an immersive experience meant to teleport them to the trenches of World War I.



It is clear that this new exhibit is an effort to attract more visitors to the site and to increase the organization's visibility at all levels of tourism. Although not overt, the new exhibit enters WWPL into the large national debate surrounding immersive exhibition techniques as the institution consciously chose to use this type of exhibition strategy in an effort to bring its exhibit program in line with its nationally known library. By contracting the exhibit design to a design firm, WWPL is aligning itself in the ring with larger institutions that are financially able to use firms to create a consistent and updated approach to communicate its objectives. WWPL, therefore, is following the trend of museums that use immersive experiences to not only attract visitors, but also to transport them to a historic scene through the use of an enveloping environment. Even though "World War One Experience" is relatively simplistic in comparison to other interactive exhibits, it employs a constructed experience with multiple sensory entry points to achieve its immersive environment.

Though the planning of the WWPL's new exhibit may, at first, appear rushed, it connects to the larger transition of the organization, one that rests with a re-evaluation of the mission in 1998, which began the process of making the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace into the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library. Returning to the four key elements discussed in the 2004 prospectus, I would like to focus on the fourth— enriching the visitor experience:

The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library exhibits will engage the visitor on many levels, emotionally as well as intellectually. Visitors to the library will understand why Wilson remains such a pivotal, compelling figure nearly a century after his presidency. Rather than treating visitors as passive observers merely looking at documents on a wall, the exhibits will actively engage them in the life and times of Woodrow Wilson.³³

By its inclusion as a separate element, the organization recognized the visitor experience as a pillar on which to construct the larger concept of the presidential library. Although the prospectus, in reference to this element, uses broad and abstract language, it is clear the new exhibits would be radically different from those installed in the museum building in 1990, due primarily to their extensive use of a sensory experience in place of presenting facts and events that mediate the history through wall texts.

The "World War One Experience," therefore, can be seen as not only updating WWPL's exhibition program, but also, as advancing its



larger vision for the museum and its visitor experience. Through its immersive elements, it connects the viewer with the subject matter and advances the knowledge of World War I and of the daily life of the soldier. This advancement of knowledge, especially the emphasis on World War I, is another core element of the new vision for the presidential library. Kearney, the former curator, asserts the new exhibition fits into the larger strategic plan of the organization “by expanding knowledge of WWI, particularly the experience of the Doughboy,”³⁴ the foot soldier of World War I. By experiencing daily life in the trenches, visitors are able to connect on a more personal level with the past, making it more relatable. The exhibit relates to the gap seen between public historians and the public, linking the viewer with history through a constructed scene and using an experience-based exhibition strategy instead of transmission model education. In this way, the immersive exhibition at WWPL is both a way to attract visitors with a “modern and up to speed” exhibit as well as a technique chosen to bring the distant events of the past closer to the present.

Teaching the events of the past and keeping them alive is essential to progress, yet the method for publicly presenting them is less clear. Public historians struggle to make the distant past relatable to museum visitors, partially through the use of immersive exhibit elements that seek to envelope them with multisensory components. These immersive techniques, however, are purported to be more of a theme park attraction than educational tools by their critics. With a closer look at WWPL, it becomes clear that immersive exhibition elements are not purely for attraction purposes but, likewise, are not used purely for educational purposes either. The reality of their purpose lies in the hands of the individual institution and their faithfulness to their mission and preliminary planning intentions. It is, therefore, up to the public and scholars alike, to continually challenge and question the status quo of museums’ methods and exhibits in order to better understand and revolutionize them.

Endnotes

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¹⁰ Cary Carson, "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall, Whose History Is the Fairest of Them All?" *The Public Historian* 17, no. 4 (Autumn 1995): 61.

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²⁰ Michael Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1996.

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²⁴ Ibid.

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²⁸ Janet Campbell, Director of Finance, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, telephone conversation with author, February 24, 2010.

²⁹ Janet Campbell, Director of Finance, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, telephone conversation with author, February 24, 2010.

³⁰ Jarod Kearny, former Curator of Collections, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, conversation with author, December 29, 2009.

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Staunton in Days of Yore

Staunton Evening Leader, Oct. 6, 1936

Located and transcribed by Richard M. Hamrick, Jr.

Editor's Note: Augusta County Historical Society charter member and retired society archivist Richard Hamrick located this interesting article in the 1936 edition of the Staunton newspaper.

An interview with John F. Brooke, this city's "Grand Old Man" who is approaching ninety-seven

Another spring finds that princely gentleman, John F. Brooke, hale and hearty for a person in this ninety-seventh year; enjoying life immensely at his comfortable home on Thompson Street and taking keen and active interest in the things about him, particularly the beautiful flower garden that blossoms under the handiwork of his daughters – with his assistance.

Born in Staunton in 1838, Mr. Brooke looks forward to his ninety-seventh anniversary on the coming Dec. 16. And as he chatted with a *Leader* reporter a day or two ago and ran over the names of the men who in their day contributed to this city's progress – Colonel Baldwin, Alexander Stuart, Thomas Michie, James Skinner, Hugh Sheffey, the Harmans, Michael, John and William; Albert Garber and William Garber, among others – he intimated that citizens of this day have a heritage of which they should be proud.

Appreciating all that modern invention has meant to present-day life, the many conveniences, more comfortable and speedier modes of travel, and on down the line, Mr. Brooke is emphatic in his belief that home life is not what it was when he was many, many years younger. "Home doesn't mean to the boys and girls and the young men and young women what it did in my day, he said as he referred to the warm ties about the family hearthstone; intimating that the modern home, in too many instances, is but a place to sleep and a place to eat.

As for the nation, this venerable man, who keeps up with the national and international span of events through his newspaper and other material, thinks "we are headed for communism, fascism, Na-



ziism or some other false doctrine: While he has always been a Democrat, Mr. Brooke is skeptical about some of the programs sponsored by the present administration. "Carter Glass and Harry Byrd seem to be the only genuine Democrats among the whole crowd down there is Washington," was his comment.

Keen Memory

Mr. Brooke's ability to recall names and dates is a little short of marvelous; they fall from his lips like answers given by a student who as assiduously prepared for an examination and is able to answer every question correctly. And his memory includes incidents in his life starting with time he was six years old.

A son of Robert Spottswood and Margaret Lyle Smith Brooke, he was born in 1838 in what present-day Staunton knows as the Bailey property at the northeast corner of Frederick Street and Central Avenue; his father having purchased that property that year. It was there that his parents died in 1851.

Central Avenue was just an alley in those early days, remarked Mr. Brooke, " with Aspen trees lining the avenue from Beverley to Baldwin; a ford across the open creek at the avenue and Frederick street corner; a foot bridge on the north side and a log on the south.

"When I was a boy, where Fallon's greenhouses now stand, there was a meadow, and nearly every winter we would build a dam across the creek in the vicinity of Baldwin Street. Ice would form on the lake, and it was there that we skated. It was there, too, that people got the supply of ice to fill their individual ice-houses.

As Mr. Brooke recalls downtown Staunton in early days, there but three residences on the block between Central Avenue and Augusta Street; that occupied by the Brookes; the Gibson house, the main – although remodeled – unit still standing at the Augusta corner, and a frame dwelling on the north side of the alley connecting Augusta and Frederick about midway of the block. On the northeast corner of Baldwin Street and Central Avenue stood the Kennedy tannery. The Presbyterian Church and the Augusta Female Seminary occupied the present site of Mary Baldwin College. On the northeast corner of Market and Frederick was a one-story house occupied by a baker named Shearer. The Manse (the Woodrow Wilson birthplace) had also been built. The Skinner house, now as part of the infirmary at SMA was built by Thomas P. Eskridge, a druggist, and later



occupied by Commodore Skinner, and then by his son, Col. James Skinner.

Just off Central Avenue on Frederick, on the south side, was a small storeroom tenanted by a tobacconist named Butler. Where the First Church Sunday school now stands, once was the city market house. Mounted on this was a bell which was rung in case of fire.

Mr. Brooke recalled, with a smile, one incident of his boyhood days in connection with the market house bell. One night Frank Berkeley, Carter Berkeley and Mr. Brooke climbed to the belfry, tied a short light string to the clapper, then a long, stronger [one] to the short length, running the string to a nearby second floor window. From this point, they kept up such a continuous ringing of the bell that Constable Craig's attention was attracted. The minion of the law finally got a ladder and climbed into the belfry. By the time he reached the loft, however, the boys had given the string a vigorous jerk, breaking it near the clapper. They then proceeded to pull the rest of the string into their window. As Mr. Brooke relates the tale, Constable Craig did a whole lot of figuring, but never quite solved the mystery of the bell's nocturnal pealing.

In those days – long before trolley cars, cars, motor buses, etc., the stage line was the modern mode of travel, stage lines serving Staunton from the four points of the compass. One of these stage stables was on the Hardy lot, North Market Street and Beverley; and another on the site of the post office.

Sam Clarke, a lawyer, justice of the peace and once mayor of the city, occupied the house at Lewis and Frederick Streets now owned by Gilpin Willson, Sr. Clarke's son later built the Highland House, site of the present Professional Building. There were several frame houses on the south side of Frederick, west of Lewis, and on the north side at the Madison intersection. The original units of Stuart Hall, the Virginia Female Institute, had been constructed.

Col. John B. Baldwin built and was the occupant of "Esseton" which faced Lewis Street. Out Lewis Street were but one or two small houses. A man whose name Mr. Brooke was not able to remember at the moment operated a garden in the vicinity of the present "Orchard" property of Col. H.H. Wayt. This man mysteriously disappeared before the "War Between The States," and was never heard of again. There was always a mystery about the incident.

In those early days, [the key thoroughfare] was Main Street –



even now Mr. Brooke says he finds himself referring to the principal thoroughfare as Main Street. Beverley Street, the official designation it now bears, just does not sound quite right to him.

The Town

One thing that gave Main Street a special distinction in the old days was the town pump – three of them, in fact, on Main Street. Mr. Brookes says there was located at Crawford's corner, or New and Beverley Street; another at Beverley and Augusta, and a third at Washington and Beverley. Then, too, there was one on Pump Street – the thoroughfare deriving its name because of the pump that pierced its surface. A big spring on Johnson Street was another source of public water supply. At that time there was no municipal water system.

Ben Crawford, a cousin of Mr. Brooke, operated a general store on the northwest corner of Beverley and New; George Price had the first hardware store on the opposite corner. Robert Bickle had a general store where the Farmers and Merchants bank stands, with his residence just north on Augusta Street. Mr. Bickle was once mayor of the city. Adam Bickle had a merchandising mart on the site of the Staunton National Bank; Marquis and Kelley operated a marble yard where Holt China store is, and N. Brooks was postmaster, his office being on the northeast corner of Beverley and Augusta.

On the Augusta National Bank corner stood Morrison Goode's general store; and mention of this caused Mr. Brooke to tell this story. A well-known man-about-town, one Ox Fox, liked his ardent spirits, but did not always possess the required coin of the realm. On one occasion, being especially thirsty, he entered the Goode store, armed with two jugs. One was empty, the other filled with water. The latter was tucked away beneath Mr. Fox's coat-tail.

While Merchant Goode was completing a transaction with a woman customer, Fox deposited the water filled jug just out of the merchant's range of vision in the vicinity of a counter. His other customer satisfied, Goode turned to "Fox, who handed the empty jug, asking that it be filled with whiskey. The merchant complied and handed the booze-laden jug to Fox, who placed it on the floor near the counter. Then Fox admitted he had no money, and asked for credit. Goode declined to accept credit and demanded the jug. During the conversation Fox had managed to shift the containers, finally handing to Goode the one containing the water.



Mr. Brooke, a twinkle in his eye, said Goode poured the contents of the jug containing water back into his liquor barrel, thinking it was his reclaimed whiskey. Just then another customer came in and just then Fox picked up the other container – embracing the ardent spirits – and departed. “Goode had just as much in his barrel as he did before, but of course did not know what he had put in it was water – and Fox had what he went after, “Mr. Brooke concluded. To his credit, Fox served in both the Mexican War and the War of the Sixties.

Charles Weller operated a store about where the trust department of the National Valley Bank stands, while in the neighborhood was the office of a Dr. Fisher, a Richmonder who came here to practice and married a sister of Nicholas Kinney. The carpenter shop of one of the Lushbaughs was near the corner of Central Avenue and Beverley streets, while about where the Crowle Building is, was a bank in which William Tams was cashier.

Town Hall

On the north side of the street, between Augusta and Central Avenue was the three-story Masonic building, predecessor of the present-day structure. There were two stores on the ground floor of this brick building; the “town-hall” occupied the second floor, and it was there that shows were presented and the ladies held their supper and bazaars. The lodge room was on the third floor.

Where the Pugh-Blakemore-Stricklen Store now stands, there was a Lutheran church. This was replaced by the Old Y. M. C. A. when the Lutherans purchased property on North Lewis and erected their present edifice.

Mr. Brooke has long been a communicant of Trinity Episcopal Church, and refers with particular affection of this section of the city. The present beautiful structure is the third on this site, if Mr. Brooke’s memory serves him correctly. He remembers the second edifice, which stood closer to both Church and Beverley Streets. Minister Castleman presided over the parish when the cornerstone of the present church was set in place in 1854.

In the outlying sections of those early days, Mr. Brooke recalls “Stuart House” on Church Street; the first units of the Western State Hospital, and extensive “Spring Farm” estate of Col. Briscoe Baldwin, now Gypsy Hill Park. This tract once extended as far out Parkersburg



pike as the Morris Mill Road, around to take in what is now Park View, and east and south for considerable distances. Mansion house, reputed to have been built by Hessian soldiers brought here as prisoners during the Revolutionary War, stood on the site of the present day Park Pavilion, or American Legion Home. In later years it was owned by the Donaghues.

In those days when Mr. Brooke was a boy, "Selma" and its extensive acres was owned by Simpson Taylor, father of the Rev. John Taylor, Baptist minister here, and the grandfather of John F. Taylor. Mr. Taylor was a brick manufacturer and contractor, Mr. Brooke asserts.

"Selma" was once owned by Col. Hierome L. Opie, who came to Augusta County from Clarke County. He was the father of John, Hierome, Thomas and Mary Opie, and the grandfather of the present Opie generation. The owner of "Selma" was killed during the War Between the States.

Mr. Brooke was present when the first train came into Staunton in 1854 over the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, but was in the West when the Valley Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio was constructed. In his time have come to Staunton such things as a modern water system, municipal free schools, expanding private schools including Staunton Military Academy, electricity, paved streets, and in more recent years, the radio.

School Days

Speaking of schools, Mr. Brooke says he attended his first class at the age of six, going to Miss Hannah Brook, sister of the postmaster. That was in 1844. Later he attended Beverley Academy, when it was on North New Street, and when the military parade ground and the favorite baseball diamond was in that same locality.

When about eighteen Mr. Brooke took a turn at teaching himself – in a one-room building near the Danner place in the county. He received one dollar per month from each pupil, and two cents per day per pupil from the county. The rule was "no attendance, no pay" and thus the teacher had to keep accurate account of each day each pupil was present. Among his pupils were the late George and Lou Myerly. The last named accumulated a considerable estate during his lifetime, bequeathing most of it to King's Daughters' Hospital.

In commenting on Staunton's water system, Mr. Brooke [remarked on the] way the first pipes were laid about 1848, at that



time the reservoir was on Sears Hill [and] the Kinney spring on the "Walnut Grove" farm, now known as the Naille place. Next, Buttermilk Spring was tapped and a reservoir built on West Johnson Street. In later years, the Gypsy hill Park system was constructed, including the reservoir on North Madison Street.

Mr. Brooke informed his interviewer that the Thornrose Cemetery Company was organized in 1849, and that the first burial took place there in 1850. Now there are about 15,000 graves in the "City of the Dead." The first person buried in Thornrose was a Negro slave woman, the Grandmother of Lincoln Jackson, sexton at Trinity Church. The first white person buried there was Mrs. Brown, wife of Court Chancellor Brown. Her body was placed in the Stuart lot.

And just here Mr. Brooke told this story. The first gravedigger was a man named McNamara, who took considerable delight in recounting this incident. One night he was completing the digging of a grave. He had thrown out the last shovelful of earth and was raising his lantern when a negro boy passed by, carrying a sack. Seeing the strange happenings in the graveyard and perhaps thinking that the resurrection day had come, the boy dropped the sack, and literally straightened out in flight. McNamara recovered the sack, which contained five hams. Mr. Brooke asserts McNamara told him he kept the hams six months, thinking the owner would make himself known. This did not happen – so McNamara's family enjoyed the treasure.

In the Whig Days

When he was just a boy, the Henry Clay and James K. Polk campaign for the presidency was in full swing. Clay, bearing the standard of the Whig party; Polk, the Democratic. Mr. Brooke's father was a Whig and served several terms in the legislature. In that campaign one of the things that impressed itself on young Brooke was a barbecue and general political celebration held in the woods on what is now the V. S. D. B. property. This was before the present school plant was erected. Mr. Brooke says as he remembers it, the original state school for the deaf and blind was located at the corner of Augusta and Johnson Streets.

Mr. Brooke's Father was for years a member of the Western State Hospital board and of the executive committee. He was one of the organizers and the first president of the Valley of Virginia Bank, an office he held at the time of this death. The Father was a graduate of West Point, class of 1821, resigning after a year in the army. He came to Staunton in 1825.



After the war – in which he served the full four years in Co. L, 5th Virginia Infantry, without being wounded – young Brooke and his brother, Frank went to Chicago, remaining there for five years. He was employed there as a bookkeeper in the McCormick reaper factory. On April 1, 1871, the brothers started West taking the Kansas and Pacific line, the first railroad to tap Denver, Colo. At Denver, a town of about 3,000 people, they equipped themselves with horses and wagons and pushed south about 200 miles. There they engaged in cattle raising until 1884, when Mr. Brooke sold his interests and returned to Staunton.

For twenty odd years he operated the “Brookelea Farm” dairy disposing of this business in 1907 when he was 70 years old. He then built the residence on Thompson Street, where he resides with his daughters, Misses Margaret and Belle Brooke.

Mr. Brooke gets about quite a bit; his step is elastic as he trips about in his garden. He likes to read his newspaper, and enjoys conversation. His custom is take a walk daily, one of his favorite places is Thornrose Cemetery.

Truly, John F. Brooke, as he approaches his ninety-seventh milestone is Staunton’s “Grand Old Man”



Vermont soldiers find death and suffering in Virginia

By Dr. Daniel A. Métraux

Editor's Note: Dr. Daniel A. Métraux, professor of Asian studies at Mary Baldwin College, is AHB associate editor and book review editor. He enjoys delving into various aspects of the area's local history.

Virginia bore the brunt of fighting during the Civil War and no Union state sacrificed a higher percentage of its soldiers than Vermont.¹ Vermont regiments suffered terrible casualties at Spotsylvania, Fredericksburg, Cold Harbor and with Sheridan up and down the Shenandoah Valley from Winchester to Staunton. Fortunately some of these soldiers kept diaries and wrote detailed letters back to their families. The experiences of two Craftsbury, Vermont, soldiers, George Robbins and Charles C. Hoyt, tell the story of so many Union soldiers who fought and died in the savage fighting that brought so much destruction to Virginia. Their story includes capture and imprisonment under concentration-camp-like conditions as prisoners of war at Andersonville, Georgia, and other Confederate prisons.

George Robbins was born in Craftsbury on 5 July 1843.² He enlisted in nearby Irasburgh on 16 July 1862 and joined Company F, 11th regiment, First Vermont Heavy Artillery. This narrative represents an extraction from his own words. His unit shipped out on September 1st by rail to New Haven, then by steamer to Jersey City and finally by train to Philadelphia. There the group "ate an excellent meal," marched down Washington Street to the cheers of many young ladies, and then boarded a train for Baltimore. Robbins and his fellow soldiers had to transfer from one station to another, but this was never an easy process because pro-Confederate support was strong and they were jeered by people who "mostly looked seshy." They had received ten rounds of bullets in case the mobs attacked them, but luckily there was little trouble and the Vermonters arrived safely in Washington.

The 1,800 men of the 11th regiment spent the next year building fortifications around Washington, but experienced no hostilities. Life was peaceful. On 22 April 1864 Robbins wrote his family:



For my part I have a good place. For 6 weeks have been Company Clerk. I have to do no guard duty, fatigue drills, dress parades – in fact, nothing but writing and copying. Worked a while with the Orderly Sergeant, then moved into the Captain's Quarters. Worked there 3 or 4 weeks. Now have an office by myself. I make out the guard reports, keep most of the company's books. Just such business as I like. When the captain has anything he wants done a little fancy-like, he always brings it to me. You know I used to be fooling in this way at home. I have the name of being the best writer in the Company.

This peaceful life came to an abrupt end in May of 1864, when Robbins' regiment joined a larger Vermont force in the Army of the Potomac. They fought in four battles in a week and suffered through the massacre at Cold Harbor. Writing from Gaines' Mill, Virginia, on June 4, Robbins wrote:

I will try and write a few lines, but don't know when I can send them. I am as well as can be expected. But for the last few days we have had most horrible times. Our regiment has been in four battles and I was in them all. I thank God I have not yet received a scratch, though for the last 3 days we have been, more or less, under terrible fire. Company F has lost one-fourth of its men fit for duty, in killed and wounded. The 1st day of June we went into action with 115 men and had 27 killed and wounded. About 3 P. M. June 1st, the rebels, commanded by Beauregard, commenced throwing shells and began skirmishing with our pickets. The whole 6th Corps formed in 3 lines of battle. Our battalion was in the center line, having a battery of 4 guns on each flank. The enemy were in heavy force in front of us, surrounded by strong batteries. They commenced to shell us, and for a short time the shells cracked and whizzed around us fearfully. But not a man of us flinched.

The Vermonters withstood these attacks and three days later were fighting at Cold Harbor, one of the bitterest battles of the war, when they experienced a first-hand visit from the enemy:

Last night we had a curious time. The "rebs" all at once ceased firing and one of their officers raised a white flag of truce. We returned it, and two of our officers stepped out over the breast works. Two rebel officers came out, met half way and talked as friendly as could be. They wanted two hours to bury their dead and take away their wounded. Our officers agreed to it, and for two hours we had peace. The men on both sides came out on top of their breastworks to look at each other. Our lines were so near each other we could talk together, but the officers would not allow much of it. I had a chance to see considerable of their lines. They have the best position; think we have the most men.

A few days later, in mid-June 1864, Robbins praised the Confederates: "The 'rebs' fight terribly and never yield until they are obliged to. They have been slaughtered awfully, and our loss has been frightful." He then tried to reassure his mother that all was well:



I feel very thankful that God has spared my life and health thus far, while lately I have witnessed such awful scenes. Tell mother not to feel concerned about me, I will do the best I can and try and take care of myself, trusting in God for protection and do my duty. I tell you what – I am entirely out of paper and envelopes and no possible way of getting any here, they are so scarce. I have known the boys offering 10 cents for an envelope. When you write again, contrive to send a sheet of paper and an envelope in each letter you write. I have known the boys to have it come so. You need not mind the stamps. A letter will go from here just as well without one, but send the paper and envelopes or I cannot write you again very soon.

Sadly this may have been the last letter Robbins sent his family. Eleven days later, on 23 June 1864, his battalion found itself isolated and surrounded by Confederates. The men fought desperately to the last, hand to hand, and only surrendered when their ammunition ran out. Robbins and fifty-three of his comrades became prisoners of war. Robbins was sent first to Charleston, South Carolina, and then to the infamous prisoner of war camp at Andersonville, Georgia, on 9 July 1864. Conditions for Union POWs were severe—all their possessions were taken and they were packed into box cars for eight days with little or no food until they arrived at Andersonville. Robbins was already very ill when he arrived at Andersonville. He was placed in a crude hospital where he died on 20 August 1864.

Another Craftsbury soldier, Charles C. Hoyt of the First Vermont Cavalry, survived to tell the gruesome tale of life at Andersonville. Born in Craftsbury in 1842, he enlisted in November 1861. He was captured a week later than Robbins, on 29 June 1864. He later wrote of his experience:

I was stripped of everything I had, except my coat, pants, shirt and vest. One of the "rebs" ordered me to take off my shirt, but I showed him a bad rent in it and he thought it was not worth taking. Besides taking my boots, hat, watch, money, knife and pipe, they took photographs and letters that were of no use to them. One of them took my Bible, and after looking into it, handed it back to me saying I would need it before I got out of prison. I told them I thought by the treatment I received there, that they ought to read the Bible more than they had done.

After stripping me in this manner, they marched me and other prisoners to the station. The sun came out, burning hot, and I tied my handkerchief over my head to protect it, when one of them snatched it off at the station.

At Stony Creek Station we were put on the cars and taken to



Andersonville. Were eight days on the way. Were packed into box cars so thick we could not lie down and suffered in them very much, and were closely guarded. When we reached Andersonville July 7th [after a ride of eight days], and were taken inside, the sight that met my eyes the recollection of which causes me to shudder even now, no pen can describe. No language has power to portray that half-starved and almost naked crowd that crowded around us, hoping to get a crumb of something from some of us, but we were a hungry set to beg from.

We drew no rations that day. Our rations for most of the time were from a gill to a pint of corn cob meal with one or two spoonfuls of molasses, or a small [piece] of pork, as large as a walnut. This was one day's rations, and several times we had to make it last for two days. We had nothing furnished to us to cook our rations in. One of our boys, one of the four I messed with, found an old piece of tin that we bent into shape, and had one knife for the four, and one spoon. We could get no wood of any account. Picked up roots and splinters where we could.

Hoyt and several other Vermonters stayed in Andersonville for two months after which they were transferred to another prison camp in Florence, South Carolina. Conditions there were just as bad, but Hoyt survived and was released in early 1865. "When I came out of that prison-pen of death and suffering, I was so weak and poor. And God only knows what I suffered in all those prisons. No man can draw the picture dark enough and a just God will hold someone to account for all this misery. "

The late Homer Reed of Craftsbury told me in 1971 that his great-grandfather was part of Hoyt's group. When they were transferred from Andersonville to Florence via Charleston, they were given three days' rations of corn and corn cob bread. Reed was so hungry that he ate the whole of his ration at once. His sudden intake of rotten food probably caused him to become violently ill and die a few days later, another victim of that infamous death camp.

Vermonters in these regiments who survived later went to Winchester and from there were engaged in General Philip Sheridan's victorious Valley Campaign that included The Burning of the Shenandoah Valley. Victory in this campaign ensured re-election for President Abraham Lincoln. Their letters reflect the intense fighting and intense suffering experienced by both soldiers and civilians in Virginia and the ugly state of prisoner of war camps in Georgia and South Carolina.

Endnotes

¹ Ironically, Vermonters also suffered higher casualties in Iraq than any other state in the early years of the current war.

² The details for this article are derived from George F. Sprague, *Soldiers' Record: Town of Craftsbury, Vermont 1861-1865* (Craftsbury, 1914).



In His Own Words The Miracle of Sight: An Interview with Ray Houser

By Donald W. Houser, Jr.

Editor's Note: Ray Houser, radio personality and volunteer extraordinaire, is a living legend in Staunton and Augusta County. In 2011 he was presented with a resolution in his honor by the Augusta County Board of Supervisors. Although most people are aware of his sight problems, fewer know about his miracle of sight. Ray's cousin, Don Houser, interviewed him in preparation for a book about the family history. What follows is a short biography of Ray and an interview about the miracle of sight.

Ray Houser Biography

Ask people in Augusta County, including Staunton, Waynesboro and Harrisonburg, if they know Ray Houser and the answer will likely be "Oh yeah, that guy on the radio?" That's a good answer, since Ray's voice has been on radio shows for some sixty-four years. In 2010 health reasons caused Ray to reluctantly sign off from his radio programs. It was a difficult decision, he says, because he loved doing what he has done for all of his adult life.

Born in Spottswood, Virginia, in southern Augusta County, Ray was the third son of Kenneth and Odell (Carson) Houser. His parents wanted him to play organ as a profession. Ray studied organ and piano for some years. He was able to create a lifetime of activity by combining singing, playing piano, fearlessness in front of a live microphone, and a wonderful gift of gab. The entire talent package became Ray.

Ray's first job in Staunton was with Smith Trucking. He recalls that he had just graduated from the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) and walked into R.R. "Jake" Smith's office and asked for a job. Jake hired him. His first radio job was at radio station WTON in Staunton. While a student at VSDB, Ray had formed



Ray Houser at the age of twenty-one.



a band called the Royal Virginians. They had occasional broadcasts on a new radio station, WTON, owned by Charles Blackley. But Ray was considering dropping out of school. Blackley heard of Ray's plan to leave school and he offered Ray a time slot on his station if Ray would agree to stay in school and graduate. Ray accepted the offer and the rest is history.

Ray's first radio show was called "Take It Easy Time." It has broadcast weekly since then. "I never missed a week," he proudly points out. He used to broadcast live from a living room but as technology advanced, it later became a show that was recorded several weeks before broadcast. Outside of working at Smith's, broadcasting on the radio, and playing in a band, he created a vending service, which he still maintains with assistance from his son.

Ray has donated thousands of hours supporting local organizations such as the Salvation Army and the Valley Mission. One of the founders of the Happy Birthday USA celebration (Staunton's Fourth of July celebration for many years), Ray worked both publicly and behind the scenes to bring together musical talent and technical expertise.

Family has always been important to Ray. His German ances-



tors were from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Two sons came to Virginia in about 1829 and settled near Greenville. The Housers in the area today are all part of the original Houser immigrants. Ray's family includes his late wife, Elizabeth (Libby) Norcross, a daughter Linda Raye, and a son, Donald Ralston.

People who know Ray will likely agree that Ray never meets a person he doesn't like. Ray is always ready to tell a story or a joke. His mind moves fast. His constantly upbeat personality and humor have resulted in a lifetime of friends. His religion is important to him and he believes in divine assistance.

Being one of the best known and respected men in the area does not mean the public knows a lot about some of Ray's personal challenges. What follows is a story, in his words, about his infancy, youth, and young adulthood as he faced vision problems. How those problems were overcome is, as he says, a miracle. "If people don't believe in miracles, tell them to talk to me!" Ray stated in a recent interview.

Now, let's meet Ray and learn of his miracles.



Wedding photograph of Ray Houser and his wife Elizabeth (Libby)



The author and Ray are cousins. This tape recorded interview took place on May 16, 2010 in Ray Houser's home on N. Augusta Street in Staunton, Virginia. I asked Ray to explain how he gained his sight, having been born blind.

Ray: On April 8, 1927, I got here, and I had no vision whatsoever. The right eye, the scar there where the pupil should be is there, but there is no pupil. And now they use a contact shell and it makes you look handsome, anyway. Now the other side, the left side, had a scar or growth on the side of the pupil that stuck out. And I was in pain all the time. And the doctors back then didn't know what to do. They did exactly what everybody else did: if your tooth hurt you pulled it. I don't know how many kids I went to school with at VSDB who in their earlier days had eye trouble, the doctors didn't know what to do for them, and their eyes were hurting, so they took them out!

So anyway, this is the way mine ended up. I would wake up every morning about six o'clock screaming and yelling. They would give me a bottle of milk or formula, and a shot. I'd go back to sleep and sleep for twelve hours. And this went on; dad said you could set your watch by it. At 6 o'clock at night I'd get awake again. They'd dry one end and feed the other end and go through it again.

And this went on from the time I was born until 1929. In January of '29 they brought me down here to King's Daughters' Hospital. Dr. Fisher said "I don't know what else to do for him to get rid of this situation except to take the eye out. We came down on a rainy morning in January of '29.

They prepared me for the operation at 7 o'clock. Well, just at the time they got ready to do my operation there was a bad automobile accident out on Greenville Avenue where the old railroad track used to go across. It was raining and freezing that morning. A man hit that railroad track, bounced off and hit a pole and the lady in the back seat came up and rammed her face through the windshield and got both eyes full of glass. So they brought her over there. He had to stop and take care of her.

Alright. They wheeled me up again. Nine o'clock ready to go. At just about that time an Ellis boy, just a young boy then over on the railroad, they were hooking up trains over there and he slipped and fell. There was ice on the ground and he slipped and fell, rammed his face down in the cinders, and they brought him over there.



So they wheeled me back and took care of him. Well, then at 11 o'clock, here they came again, ready to do mine. And a Crawford fellow, I knew his children later on, he had been on a three-week drunk and when he came home his wife threw a butcher knife at him and it caught him in the corner of the eye, so they brought him over there. They had to wheel me back and take care of him.

And (Dr. Fisher) told my dad, "I'm a gambler, and I've been interrupted three times and I'm not supposed to take his eye out." So they didn't. They didn't know what to do about the eye. They sent me back home.

And Mrs. Kinzel, who was Aunt Gertrude's mother, came from Staunton to Spottswood one Sunday with Aunt Gertrude and Uncle Hugh (Houser). She brought a prayer cloth that she had ordered out of this paper, and she brought it up there to the house. This is about the first of February of '29.

Mom said, "I won't have anything to do with that, that's witchcraft." And dad said, "Well I'll do it." Here is how a prayer cloth works. They put the cloth on the person, at whatever part of the body has the problem. And everyone stands in a circle and joins hands and they have a prayer. And the mother or the closest family member holds their hand on the person that they are praying for.

Don: Did they use the prayer cloth once?

Ray: Yes. That's what Aunt Gertrude said.

Don: Do you know who was there?

Ray: Uncle Hugh, Aunt Gertrude, Mrs. Kinzel, and mom and dad, was what Aunt Gertrude told me. If Kenneth and Herb were around, they must have been outside. Well, after they used the prayer shawl, I was still on the twelve-hour deal, and Momma had a nurse friend, Miss Pikko, we called her Petey. She was a Special, and she would Special with people in the hospital or in homes. And she kept pretty busy. Lots of times she would have a week or two between people and she would come up and stay with us and just help mom.

Petey was up there at our house. It was one afternoon, it must have been about the first part of June of '29. Maybe a Monday or a Tuesday, it was early in the week. And they realized they didn't hear me. I was in a downstairs bedroom. I had been in that baby bed for two years or so. They heard something in the bedroom and it was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. They knew it wasn't time for me to be up. And when they went in there, I was up on my knees pointing



toward the window. And they had these green window shades and they were pulled down. The window was open and the wind was blowing one of them back and the light was coming in. And I was pointing to it. Someone said "that child can see!"

And that's the first thing that I had ever done. I had not been able to talk and that was the first thing they saw me do. So they grabbed me up. I wasn't screaming or crying. I didn't have any pain. They got dad out of the blacksmith shop and we got in the old model T and came down to Dr. Fisher's office. He gave me a test there, I guess, and said, "Yeah, he can see." And that's the way that went.

He put glasses on me when I was five, almost six, and worked with me trying to improve it and trying to get the scar off. The growth had gone away but there was still a scar on the side of the pupil, which blocked part of the optic nerve. He worked with me on and on and on up until I was twenty years old.

Ray: Now, I didn't know any of this. Mom and dad never told me a word about this. And in the '60s, I went over to Aunt Gertrude's. I found Aunt Gertrude's suitcase. She had lost it on a bus. I had to stay for lunch. She told me all of this stuff that I didn't know. And I was so grateful to her for that. Of course mom and dad had passed on by then.



Houser family photograph: Ray's brothers Walter Kenneth "Pete" Houser, Jr., Lyle Carson Houser, his father Kenneth, his mother Odell, and Ray, holding his daughter Linda.



Don: If Aunt Gertrude had not given you that information, none of us would have ever known about that prayer cloth.

Ray: That's right. Aunt Gertrude did that and I was always grateful to her. Mom wouldn't tell me and she wouldn't let dad tell me.

Don: Why do you suppose that was?

Ray: I don't know.

Don: Is it your belief that you can see because of that prayer with the prayer shawl? Do you believe it was a miracle?

Ray: Yes. I always did, because it came on so close after that. It was just about three months after that. That's bound to have had something to do with it. And I tell people, If you don't believe in prayer shawls, ask me. I can give you firsthand experience! And I tell people, If you don't believe in miracles, ask me! Because I see them every day. I'm a firm believer in things like that.

If you can get out here and drive to Richmond and all around through Richmond at all hours of the day and night, like I do, and don't have a wreck or somebody hits you or something, to me that's a miracle. I see cars that are all beat up and banged up. I have a car out there that has one little place where I backed into a wall up in Woodstock. They had changed the wall and I didn't know it.

Don: You said that Aunt Gertrude's mother, Mrs. Kinzel, had the prayer shawl. Did Aunt Gertrude tell you more about it?

Ray: Yes. She ordered it. Aunt Gertrude said that her mother kept it. I don't know what happened to it. I've heard of that happening several times. But it happened to me. And He meant for it to be and Mrs. Kinzel was the one to do it.

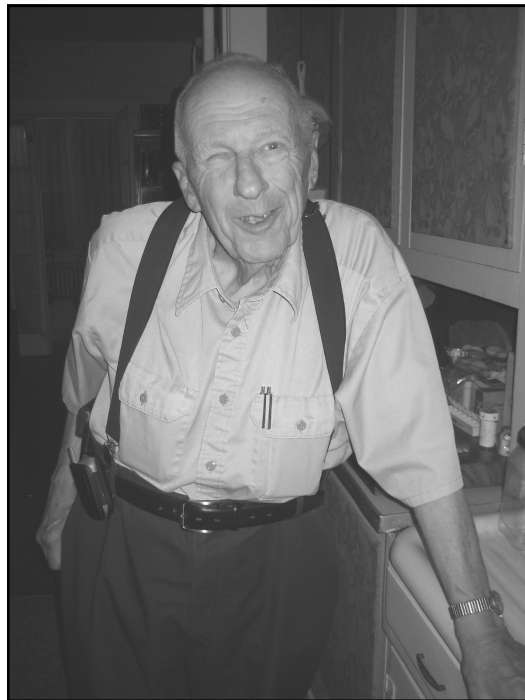
Don: When I write this down, is it okay with you if I include it in the Houser Family History book?

Ray: You can put it in anything you want to, and anything else that I've got that I can help you with.



*Ray and Libby Houser
with their children,
Donald on the left and
Linda on the right.*

*Ray Houser at home on the
day of his interview with his
cousin Don Houser.*





About the author and this interview: Ray's full name is Harold Ray Houser, born Apr. 8, 1927. His parents were Walter Kenneth (Kenny) and Odell Mays Carson Houser. His brothers were Lyle Carson Houser and Walter Kenneth Houser, Jr., who was known as Pete. Carson retired as a U.S. Navy Commander and died in 1969. Pete was a machinist and worked at Virginia Metal Crafters and before that, he worked for a firm up near Washington, D.C. Pete died in 1968. Ray married Elizabeth (Libby) Norcross in 1930. She passed away in 1994. Their two children are Donald and Linda.

According to Don Houser, "My dad was Donald W. Houser, Sr. of Churchville. Dad and Ray's dad Kenneth were half-brothers. Dad and Kenneth Houser's father was James William Houser. They had the same father, different mothers due to a second marriage. So Ray and I have the same grandfather. Being older, Ray remembers him. I do not. I guess Ray and I must be half-first cousins, but we have been friends for many years.

I have known Ray most of my life. Ray and I were both in radio, Ray at WTON and me at WAFC, later becoming WKDW, before Ray joined us later at WKDW. (Housers seem to gravitate into radio for some reason.) Rex Houser at WTON claimed he was not related to us. (His loss! Ha)

Ray, my dad, and I have always been interested in family history. Since Ray has never forgotten anything he ever heard or anyone he ever met, my dad and I visited him quite often and spent a lot of time with him as I was creating the family Houser History. My dad passed away in 1990, but Ray and I continued to spend time together since then, looking at old family photos. Ray provided me with a lot of first-hand Houser family stories and is glad I was creating a written history of stories and photographs. (The early Housers came from Chambersburg, Pa. to the Steeles Tavern area in about 1828 and they married Steele sisters. That is how our Houser family line got to Virginia. They are of German background.)

As a newspaper reporter at the *Staunton News Leader* in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I had the opportunity to "cover" Ray at many of his appearances at the Happy Birthday USA committee, Salvation Army, church services, family reunions, variety shows when he was MC, and seeing him downtown.



I conducted this interview because I was aware of some of Ray's incredible story regarding his vision, and wanted to hear it firsthand from Ray. In the course of the interview, Ray naturally came up with much more information that I had expected. I did not know about the prayer shawl. I realized that his "Miracle of Sight" story was something that should be shared with more than just the Houser family. Ray credits the late J.R. 'Jake' Smith and Charles Blackley with invaluable support and friendship as he was starting out in life. I hope that people will read this interview and learn something about Ray that will serve as a source of inspiration. Ray Houser, one of the best known men in Staunton and Augusta County, is a positive individual with great religious faith, who absolutely believes in miracles, and has a great sense of humor. His story and his memories deserve to be shared."

This interview was conducted in May 2012 and updated in June of 2010. Ray Houser left radio in 2009. As of the printing of this *Bulletin* in March 2012, he still lives at home on North Augusta Street in Staunton.



Some nineteenth-century Irish in Augusta County & Life along the tracks

By Kevin Donleavy of Clann Mhór

Editor's Note: The fall meeting of the Augusta County Historical Society was held Nov. 6, 2011, at St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church in Staunton. The program, presented by representatives of Clann Mhór, which started as a research group dealing with the construction of the original Blue Ridge Railroad line that ran the seventeen miles from the Mechum's River (near Ivy, Va.) up through the mountains to the South River in Waynesboro. They have evolved to include the continuation of the railroad construction further west to Staunton and Clifton Forge. Key to understanding the railroad history of the region is learning about the Irish workers hired to construct the line. Researchers with Clann Mhór, which means Great Family in Gaelic, have collected the names of over 1,900 Irish workers and their families and 100 slaves associated with the railroad.

The Irish who came to Augusta County in the early and middle nineteenth century were relative newcomers. Hundreds of Gaelic-speaking Irish had arrived in the mid-1600s on the Virginia coast, exiles from English political repression and economic exploitation. By the eighteenth century their small sub-communities were well established in places as far distant as Norfolk and Winchester. The newcomers worked as merchants, teachers, watchmakers, farmers, carpenters, newspaper editors, and sail-makers. In scores of smaller locales, too, the newcomers lived at Doylestown, Kinsale, Quillen Ridge, Callaghan, Roark's Gap, Irish Neck, and Connor's Grove.

In the mid-1800s the construction of the railroad, from Richmond to Charlottesville and through the Blue Ridge Mountains to Staunton and beyond, provided work for several thousand Irish emigrants. Most of these new arrivals lived a marginal existence for nearly a decade in work camps along the rail line in Augusta, Nelson, and Albemarle Counties. Hundreds of them apparently moved on to Clifton Forge, Covington, Cincinnati, and Chicago. Early research by a local history group, the Clann



Mhór collective, has drawn significant conclusions about these Irish workers from local marriage and burial records. The conclusions add new details to the history of Augusta County.

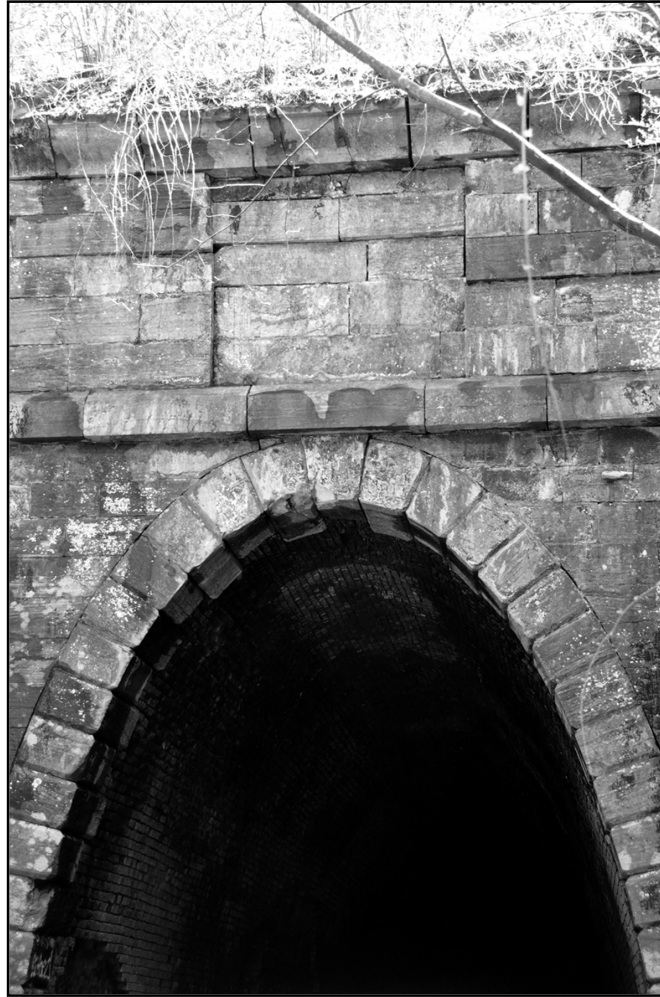
Michael Quinlan was a prominent Staunton citizen, having been born in 1795 in the Irish town of Thurles in County Tipperary. Shortly before his death in 1849, he bequeathed property in Staunton for a new church, which would become St. Francis of Assisi. In 1841, the Reverend Daniel Downey had conducted religious services at Quinlan's brick home; Father Downey would become the first pastor at the new church.

Downey was marrying couples in the 1840s. Among the newlyweds were individuals with such Irish surnames as Crickard, Mannian, Devay, McNamara, Curran, Murry, and Reilly. In 1847 he joined Peter McNalley and Elizabeth Dunkle; the witness to the nuptials was Patrick McNamara. In June of 1849, Father Downey conducted burial services for the wife of a Michael McAteer; Downey himself is interred in Staunton's Thornrose Cemetery; he lived from c.1802 until 1874.

(Downey was acquitted in a Charlottesville court of murder charges against one of his parishioners after several convictions in Staunton. He was well known otherwise as a good shepherd of his flock, in particular for his benevolent assistance toward members of the black community in Staunton.)

Between 1853 and 1857, seventy-one marriages were solemnized by Father Downey, and the vast majority were between Irish-born men and women who were living in Augusta County. County and church records reflect the names of parents in Ireland in about fifty instances; and the majority of the newweds were in their twenties or thirties.

Most of these marriage ceremonies were performed in Staunton at the Catholic church. However, according to the published parish history, Father Downey had a "chapel of plank" erected amidst the Irish workers living on the Augusta side of the peak of Afton Mountain. Several marriages were consecrated there. Patrick Leyne married Mary Gorman there on January 4, 1854, at the Big Tunnel; he was a railroad laborer, and both were twenty-two years old. At that same tunnel on January 31 of that year, Thomas Flynn married Ellen Wallace. She was a widow, age thirty-two; he was a laborer, age twenty-eight. John Dacy (born in Cork) was their marriage witness.¹ Irish surnames on marriage and burial records of this period indicate that a majority of these Irish emigres had left counties Cork and Kerry: Sullivan, O'Leary, Cronin, Hurley, Donovan, Heggarty, Ryan, McCarthy, Kileen, Crawley, Shay, and Mahony.



"The Big Tunnel" (the Blue Ridge Tunnel) as it looked on the western Augusta County side. The blank area just above the entrance (West Portal, Blue Ridge Tunnel) once held a plaque or portal stone. At some point it was removed, and it is now stored at the Virginia Military Institute. The six-foot by seven-foot stone is cracked and broken in several places. The inscription on the stone is as follows: C & O.R.R. through Blue Ridge. This work commenced A.D. 1850 by Commonwealth of Virginia, under direction of Board Public Works. President: John B. Floyd, Governor, Va., Directors: Robert Butler, Treasurer; Robert Johnson, First Auditor, Stafford Parker, Reg. Land office; Claudius Crozet, Chief Engineer; A. M Dupuy, Assistant Engineer.



Between 1853 and 1860, at least ninety Irish were interred at Thornrose in Staunton. The burial register certifies that at least twenty-seven Irish deaths occurred at that Big Tunnel: men, women, an children.

Mary Holleran, a native of County Clare, was twenty-six when she died there of cholera in 1854. Tom Mahany from County Cork died at age thirty in that same year of sun stroke. Mary Conner, age thirty-two, died in 1853 during childbirth; she had emigrated from County Kerry.

Causes of death are indicated in the cemetery ledger and include an accidental fall, pleurisy, cholera, tunnel cave-in, pneumonia, brain fever, and a fractured skull. Among the other victims at the Big Tunnel were Michael Slattery, Mary Barry, Garrett Wright, James Haggerty, Edward Walsh, Patrick Crowley, Mrs. Duvall, and Michael McCarty.

Headstones at Thornrose often reveal places of origin, such as Counties Clare, Kerry, Tipperary, Down, Cork, Limerick, and Derry. A few stones are more specific: Patrick Burns came from Tralee in Kerry; Owen Ryan had come from Newport in Tipperary; and Thomas Mahany came from Ballymartill in Cork.

Long after the completion of the rail line through the Augusta area, there were in 1907 some two dozen Thornrose lot owners of Irish extraction, a Daly and a Toohey, a Dineen and an O'Toole, a Sheehan and a Carmody. A few years later, in 1921, among the Perpetual Care Fund subscribers were two Kivlighans, an O'Keefe, and an O'Donnell. (See the bibliography.)

In the burial grounds of the old Western State Hospital there are nearly two dozen graves of people with Irish names. The surnames include Lafferty, O'Connor, Quinn, Ryan, Grady, Hannegan, Downey, Collins, O'Day, and McCarthy.

Interested readers are directed to the website, ClannMhor.org, for additional information and photographs about the Irish and slave workers who built the railway in central Virginia in the mid-1800s. I offer my thanks to fellow researchers Dan Burke, Rhonda Roebuck, and Michael Brittingham for their valued suggestions about content and graphics. We work as a contented collective group.

Among items in Augusta County that will be researched in early 2012 are the location of a small community called Dublin at the western foot of Afton Mountain, and a system of fitted, hollowed-out logs used by Irish workers to provide water down to their cabins below Rockfish Gap. In May 2012 an archaeological field school will be opened in the Greenwood-Brooksville section of western Albemarle



County. Professor Stephen Brighton who teaches at the University of Maryland will initiate the only “Irish dig” in Virginia, with the focus being on putative sites of Irish cabins inhabited by the Irish and slave workers. Augusta and Nelson county sites will be the subject of exploration in subsequent years.

Further readings will be found in *The Irish in Early Virginia 1600-1860*, to be published in 2012. The author is Kevin Donleavy. Sources: *Augusta County Marriages, 1853-1882; Beautiful Thornrose Cemetery*. Staunton, VA, 1907; *Beautiful Thornrose: Memorial Edition*. Staunton, VA, 1921; Gleeson, David T. *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877*. Chapel Hill, NC, 2001; Hairfield, Hampton, Elizabeth Hairfield, and Jane Smith, eds. *A History of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 1845-1995*. Staunton VA, 1995; Hamrick, Richard M., Jr. "Burials in Augusta County, Virginia Cemeteries." Part Two. Staunton, VA, 1985; Hawke, George R. *A History of Waynesboro, Virginia to 1900*. Waynesboro, VA, 1997; Miller, Kerby, and Paul Wagner. *Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America*. Washington, D.C., 1994; Schrier, Arnold. *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850-1900*. Chester Springs, PA: 1997.

¹Hampton Hairfield et al, *A History of St. Francis of Assisi Parish*, 8.

Life along the tracks

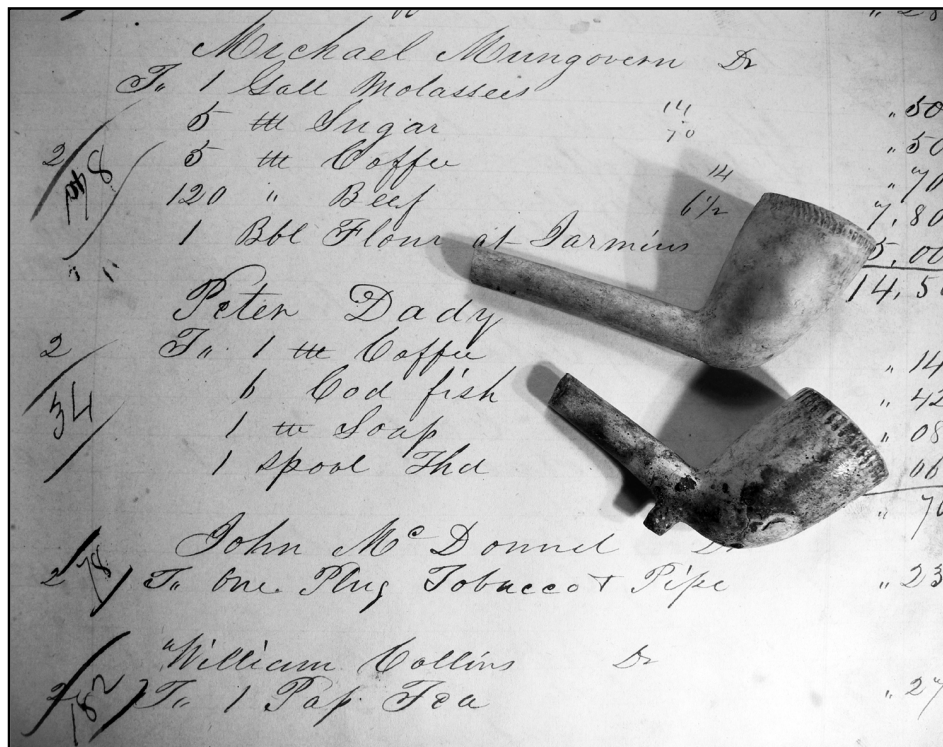
A old rural store in Albemarle County at the eastern foot of Afton Mountain in the 1850s was usually open for Irish railway workers from Monday through Saturday. Items bought there probably would have been similar to those stocked at any store in Augusta County for those who worked on the western side of the mountain. Purchases at the store were recorded daily in a ledger. Here are the customers and the items they bought on January 30, 1852, a typical day's commerce with “the boys who pushed the steel” on the new railroad project. We are given a glance at the needs of these Irish workers. Michael Mungoven: one plug of tobacco. Thomas Nash: one gallon of molasses and three pounds of sugar. Micael Keyton: one pair of drawers. William Collins: three pounds of rice and nineteen pounds of fish. James Y. Good: four pounds of coffee and one pair of drawers. Andrew Morafty: one pair of shafts and one pack saddle. James Sandusky: one plug of tobacco. John N. Meeks: three pounds of sugar and three pounds of coffee. Patrick Lee: four pounds of fish. John Dillon: two pounds of sugar. Tim Holihan: three pounds of sugar, a half-gallon of molasses, two pounds of coffee, and one paper of tea. Peter Dady: six pounds of fish. James O'Connell:



one plug of tobacco. Andrew Conway: one pair of drawers.

During the early 1850s in central Virginia, as the work of building the railroad from Albemarle and Nelson Counties west to Staunton and blasting the tunnels got underway, some 240 Irish workers had most of their physical needs met at a country store in western Albemarle County. The store ledger for 1852 gives us some details about this ethnic working community as it emerges from the shadows of anonymity. This ledger consists of some ninety-odd pages for those employed on the Virginia Central Rail Road (VCRR). Each Irish worker's purchases were recorded in these daily records. Passbooks were issued by the VCRR to each worker, and each book was numbered.

The men probably visited the store during the daylight hours, most of them tired and grimy with rock dust. The variety of items purchased suggests that the store was of considerable size, for the inventory was somewhat large and varied. Food and clothing were the major purchases. The food basics included flour, sugar, salt, molasses, rice, beef,



Customer	Item	Quantity	Price
Michael Mungovern Dr	To 1 Gall Molasses	14	50
	5 lb Sugar	70	50
	5 lb Coffee	14	70
	120 " Beef	6 1/2	80
	1 Bbl Flour at Garmier		5.00
			14.50
Peter Dady	To 1 lb Coffee		14
	6 Cod fish		42
	1 lb Soap		08
	1 Spool Thread		06
			70
John Mc'Donnell	To one Plug Tobacco Pipe		23
William Collins	To 1 Pap Tea		27

This is a ledger page from a general store in the Greenwood area that sold goods to the Irish workers. Tobacco and pipes were popular items purchased by the Irish workers.



fish, tea, and coffee. The store sold molasses by the gallon, salt by the bushel, and flour by the barrel. Clothing items frequently bought were pants, flannel shirts, suspenders, shoes, drawers, socks, and overcoats. On rare occasions, there were luxury items bought: a satin vest, "fine Boots," a black hat, a green coat, a "Figured Vest," and cotton and silk handkerchiefs. Perhaps the single men intended to make a good impression upon any young available girls by sprucing themselves up with such finery. Other store goods included blankets, candles and boxes of matches, writing paper, soap (sold by the pound), pipes, thread, rolls of calico, plugs of tobacco, bars of brown soap, and starch (by the pound). The Fusee match was made in strips that could be torn off but were for pipe and cigar smokers and for outdoor use. They remained in use until about 1865.

When large quantities of beef and fish were brought to the store, there must have been a stream of Irish buyers. These two items were sold within a few hours of their arrival. Here's an outline of the beef sold on a typical workday, March 9, 1852:

John Dunovan, Passbook number 179, bought 111 pounds.
Patrick Lee (# 238) bought 106 pounds.
Thomas Nash (# 209) bought 225 pounds.
John Ambrose (# 13) bought 144 pounds.
Michael Carmody (# 185) bought 112 pounds.
Tom Hunihan (# 236) bought 252 pounds.
Maurice Rallehan (# 201) bought 236 pounds.
John Dillon (# 203) bought 113 pounds.

On that same day, local man William Graves purchased 512 pounds of beef, presumably to feed Irish workers who boarded with him. Another local, Samuel Morris, bought 106 pounds. In all, some 1,917 pounds of meat were sold that day. The beef was probably recently butchered and roughly dressed.

When eggs came to the store, they were quickly snatched up as well, according to the ledger pages. On February 25 and 26, 1852, John Dillon got four dozen eggs, Thomas Nash got nine dozen, and Michael Mungoven got six dozen. A few days later, Mungoven returned for four dozen more eggs and fifty pounds of bacon.

Whenever mackerel was present, it probably came in large barrels of salty brine. On March 4, 1852, Tim Holehan bought four dozen of



these fish, John Dunnovan bought two dozen, Denis Callahan bought three dozen, and Michael Mungoven bought three dozen.

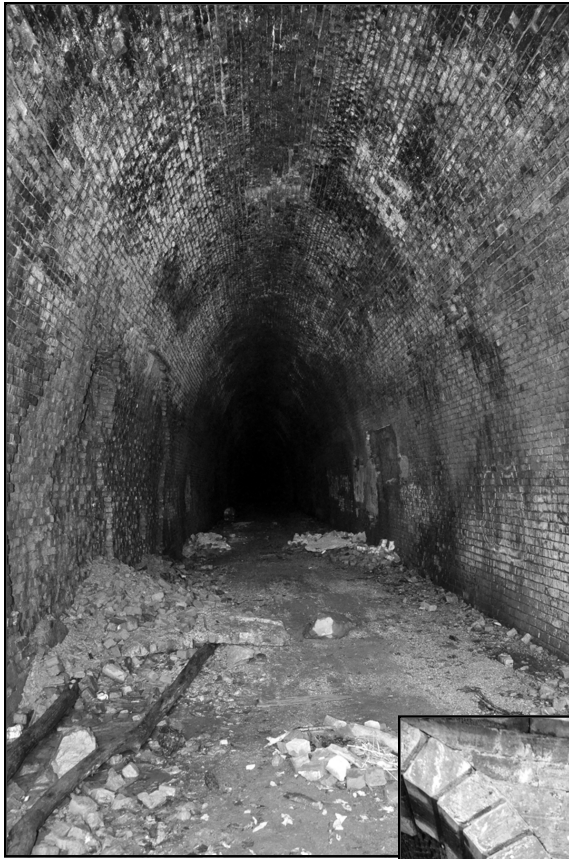
When Martin Nee was hired onto the railway work force, he visited the store for the first time in April of 1852. On the third of the month, this newcomer was sold thirty pounds of beef and two blankets. Two days later he popped in for two pounds of black pepper. He bought fourteen pounds of fish on the sixth, as well as two barrels of flour. He returned on April 8 to carry away thirty-eight pounds of bacon, and on the sixteenth he came back for an additional thirteen pounds of bacon.

Most of these émigré Irish must have thought at times they had arrived in “the land of milk and honey,” *bainne agus mil*. They knew only too well the horrors of food unavailability and starvation as they labored with pick, shovel, and crude explosives, but they were on their long way from being an “underdog to citizen,” *iochtaran to cathroir*, as they had been in Ireland.

This rural establishment was situated close enough to the tunnels that some workers stopped in every day for their small bit of tobacco. Perhaps they would pass some time going to the brick post office, which was located beside the Brooksville Inn where civil engineer Claudius Crozet lodged. The majority of these Irish were single men, mostly young, and they devised ways to occupy their off hours: tending cabbage and potato plots, catching a needed nap, discussing their work conditions, or talking about Repeal efforts in Ireland.¹ Certainly some would have tended their mountain-spring efforts to brew highly-sought *uisce beatha*, pure whiskey, among the oaks, pines, and tulip-poplars high in the hills.

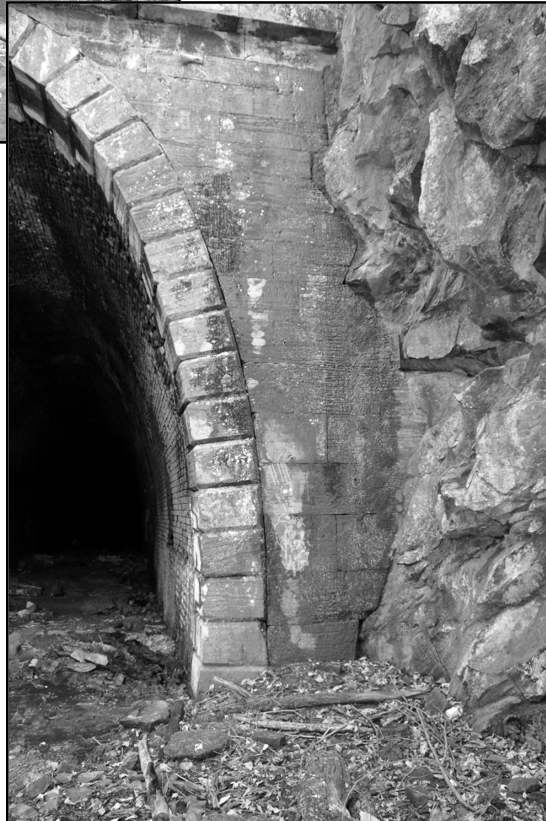
We can easily speculate that there would have been music, dancing, and singing among these Gaelic arrivals, some of whom knew each other in Ireland. A fiddler would have used free time to go over tunes with a melodeon player for a Saturday night hooley. The dancers would have included men taking the women’s places in some formations. Many of these exiles would know such set dances from Cork as the Newmarket or Skibbereen or Ballyvourney steps. Or they would “step it out” to such Kerry formations as the Dingle, Glencar, or Kenmare sets.

Songs would have accompanied these transplants who had come “over the western ocean.” Many would have known “The Jail of Clonmel,” which had been put into English by Cork writer J.J. Callanan. The verses focus on a wandering spailpin, farm hand, from the Iveragh peninsula in Kerry who traveled up to the Duhallow area searching for work. Favorite Cork songs would have included “The Groves of Blar-



Interior of the Blue Ridge Tunnel - Millions of bricks were made, transported, and then installed in three of tunnels on the Blue Ridge Railroad. In some areas, the bricks are five courses thick

West facade of the Blue Ridge Tunnel - The tunnel seems to emerge right out of the rock. The facade of the West Portal of the Blue Ridge Tunnel is constructed of carved limestone. Irish stone masons would have gathered stone from a local quarry to create these stones. The Blue Ridge payroll indicates that as many as seven stone masons were working on this tunnel in 1852.





ney" and a comical piece, "The Peeler and the Goat." There might have been ballads from well-known Thomas Moore.

Political songs would have been sung on occasion: "The West's Asleep," and "O'Donnell Abu," and "A Nation Once Again." Some singers would have given out "Mollie Ban" or a version of "Bold Jack Donohue" (hanged in Australia in 1828). Kerry emigrants could sing "The Outlaw of Loch Lene." Some here in the Blue Ridge Mountains in the 1850s might have already heard verses about the rescue of the Fenian political prisoners from Australia. Sooner or later, these Irish would hear Americans singing the cowboy ballad, "The Streets of Laredo." They'd show a smile of recognition, for the melody came from Ireland and is used in such songs as "Phelim Brady, the Bard of Armagh " and the lament for O'Sullivan Beare.

Here in Virginia, the Irish stayed together, realizing that their strength was in their numbers and kin and friends. The sight of the hills and mountains gave them mental relief from their arduous labor, but they would have been constantly reminded of the land they were forced to leave behind.

The following Irish names were found in the 1852 Local Store Ledger²

Note: Clann Mhór has made an effort to use standardized spellings on the names Denis and Maurice (not Dennis or Morris). We have also encountered many other name variants in looking at various archival sources in Virginia, from applications for U.S. citizenship to payroll and death records. As for surnames, the following observations (derived in part from Edward MacLysaght's studies) may be helpful to readers and fellow-researchers. Variant spellings for Cain are Keane and Kain. Chooke or Chookan is a Leinster family name. The name Busteed is found in Cork. O'Dea is the older spelling of Dee. The name Fall might derive from Falvey, of Cork and Kerry origin. The surname Good is often a variant of Gould, both being found in Ireland; the Irish form is Gul. The Irish for Harrington is hIongardail, often anglicized to Hingerty. The orthographic possibilities of Hounihan are many: Honahan, Hinihan, Honehan, Hunyhan, and the like. The unusual name Kinifix is a Cork surname; its Irish form is Cinipheic. Layden, Laden, and Layton are forms of Liddane. Moynihan has such related forms as Minihan and Monehan. O'Se, Shea, and Shay are the same name.

Endnotes

¹These activities aimed at disestablishing the union of Ireland and England imposed by London in 1801.

²Compiled and transcribed by Kevin Donleavy.



Aherne, Maurice
Ambrose, John
Antrim, John T.
Bahan, Michael
Bahen, John
Balihan, Morris
Barrett, James
Barrett, John
Barrett, Richard
Barrett, William
Barton, Edward
Batteman, Thomas
Belew, John A.
Bowler, James
Braton, Edward (no. 7)
Bruggy, Mathew
Buckley, Cornelius
Buckley, Mrs.
Buckley, Mrs. Cornelius
Burk, Daniel
Burke, James
Burke, Patrick
Burkley, Cernadeane
Busteed, Daniel
Cain, Martin
Cain, Michael
Callahan, Denis
Callahan, Jerry
Callahan, Maurice
Callahan, Terry
Cannon, John
Carmody, James
Carmody, Michael
Carr, Tim
Carroll, Michael
Casey, Phillip
Cashlehan, Denis
Chapman, William
Chookan, Daniel
Cleary, Michael
Codders, Patrick
Colders, Pat
Coleman, Joseph
Coleman, Michael
Collins, William
Connors, John
Connors, Maurice
Connors, Patrick

Connors, Richard
Conway, Andrew
Cree, Martin
Crohan, Thomas
Crohen, Daniel
Crohen, Teddy
Cronin, Daniel
Cronin, Denis
Cronin, Patrick
Cross, Thomas
Crowley, Denis
Crowley, John
Curren, Denis
Curren, Richard
Dady, Peter
Daly, John
Dawson, Michael
Dee, Brian
Dee, Edmund
Dee, Patrick
Dee, William
Dillon, John
Dody, Patrick
Dunavan, John
Dunavan, Patrick
Dunnley, Dennis
Dwyer, Pat
Fahey, Patrick
Fall, Patrick
Flanagan, Michael
Flower, Simon
Flynn, Nicholas
Flynn, Thomas
Fox, Michael
Ganning, James
Gardener, Patrick
Grady, Patrick
Gully, William
Harrington, James
Higgins, Daniel
Higgins, Michael
Hinehan, James
Holihan, Timothy
Hollahan, James
Holland, Jarrey
Holyhan, Timothy
Honehan, James
Hopett, Patrick

Hounihan, Tim
Hunyhan, James
Hurley, John
Hurly, John
Kalehan, Morris
Kallehan, Michael
Keaton, Michael, Boss
Kelly, John
Kelly, Michael
Kelter, James
Kenadey, John
Kenalley, Patrick
Kennedy, Anthony
Kennedy, Cornelius
Kennedy, Patrick
Keyton, Michael
King, Daniel W.
Kinifix, John
Kough, James
Kullehan, Morris
Layden, Patrick
Layden, Patrick
Layden, Patrick
Lee, Martin
Lee, Patrick
Lee, Timothy
Long, James
Lynch, James
Macarty, Eugene
Mack, James
Mack, Michael
Mahaney, Patrick
Mahee, Jeremiah
Mahon, Jeremiah
Mahon, Jeremiah
Malone, Edward
Maloney, Daniel
Maloney, Pat
Mayo, Joseph
McCarty, Eugene
McCarty, Thomas
McDonal, John
McHugo, John
McHugo, Patrick
McMahon, Simon
McMahon, Patrick
McNamara, James
McTeague, Patrick



Moraffy, Andrew
Moraffy, Patrick
Moran, James
Moynihan, Timothy
Mungavan, Michael
Murphy, John
Murphy, Martin
Murphy, Michael
Myers, John
Nash, James
Nash, Morris
Nash, Tom
Nee, Martin
O, Brian, Patrick

O'Connell, James
O'Connor, Dennis
O'Daniel, John
O'Donnel, John
O'Neal, Timothy
Owens, William
Pelter, James
Quigley, Thomas
Quinlin, Thomas
Quinn, Martin
Rallehan, Morris
Reilly, Edward
Relehan, Maurice
Relehan, Michael

Ryan, Cornelius
Ryan, John
Ryan, Michael
Ryan, Thomas
Scanlan, Patrick
Scanlan, Timothy
Seales, Michael
Shanahan, James
Shanahan, John
Shaughnessy, James
Shaughnessy, Thomas
Shea, John
Tool, Patrick

*Looking out
from the west
portal of the
tunnel.*





Information about St. Francis

Editor's Note: Before the program presentation at the ACHS Fall Meeting held at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Staunton, two brief historical excerpts were presented. The first was a history of the stone types used in the construction of the present church and the second was an abridged history taken from the history book written by Hampton Hairfield, Jr., with some updates by church business manager Alexa Kempson.

The stone types at St. Francis

The type of stone on the exterior of St. Francis is very different from stones one observes in this area. It was quarried for a relatively short period of time and then abandoned due to its inferior qualities. It is a softer material and more susceptible to deterioration than harder stones like limestone or bluestone. It was prized for its unique green coloring.

The church actually has four kinds of stone. The majority is the green "Serpentine" stone that gives the church its color. The foundation, which is a light gray, is native Shenandoah Valley limestone. The tan colored stone around the windows and that runs horizontally around the church in a narrow band is Indiana Limestone. In the tower there can be seen Bluestone that was used to make repairs some decades ago. Below are excerpts from a recent report on the stone of the exterior and its condition.

Excerpted from a report by Frazier Associates

Southeastern Pennsylvania contains a number of buildings built of serpentine stone due to proximity to the main serpentine quarries in Chester County. James Flory made a trip to this area to observe some of these buildings and determine the success of repair methods used. A visit to the abandoned site of the Brinton Quarry in West Chester, most likely the quarry that supplied stone to St. Francis, was also included.

The serpentine stone is of primary interest to this report, since it is this stone that is failing and causing the need for corrective action. Serpentine was used primarily in late 19th century due to distinctive greenish color. It was quarried primarily in Chester County, Pennsylvania, but is no longer quarried due to poor performance as a building stone



A. Existing Stone and Construction

The existing construction of the exterior walls consists of solid brick masonry backup faced with several types of building stone. The primary stone is the green serpentine laid in a random ashlar pattern. The lighter Indiana limestone is used as an accent, often beautifully carved around windows, at pilaster finials and at the elaborate surrounds at the entrance and rose window. A light grey native limestone is used for the foundation wall below the watertable and also for the retaining walls used along the sidewalk on Augusta Street. Pennsylvania Bluestone is seen at the upper section of the bell tower and was an earlier replacement of the serpentine in that area.

E. Review of Literature

The National Park Service (NPS) has published Tech Notes MASONRY NUMBER 1 "Substitute Materials: Replacing Deteriorated Serpentine Stone with Pre-Cast Concrete." This publication includes a good background on serpentine stone with similar problems to the ones encountered at St. Francis. While it replaces the serpentine with precast concrete, it also considers the option of replacement with natural building stone.

The *Mines and Minerals of Chester County, Pennsylvania* by Ronald A. Sloto, details a good history of the Brinton Quarry. Quarrying for building stone began around 1720, peaking in production from the mid- to late-1800s. A quarry ad from April 4, 1879, referencing the building of College Hall at the University of Pennsylvania, includes a quote from architect T.W. Richards:

The stone is harder now than when first built in the wall ... and has shown no indications of crumbling.

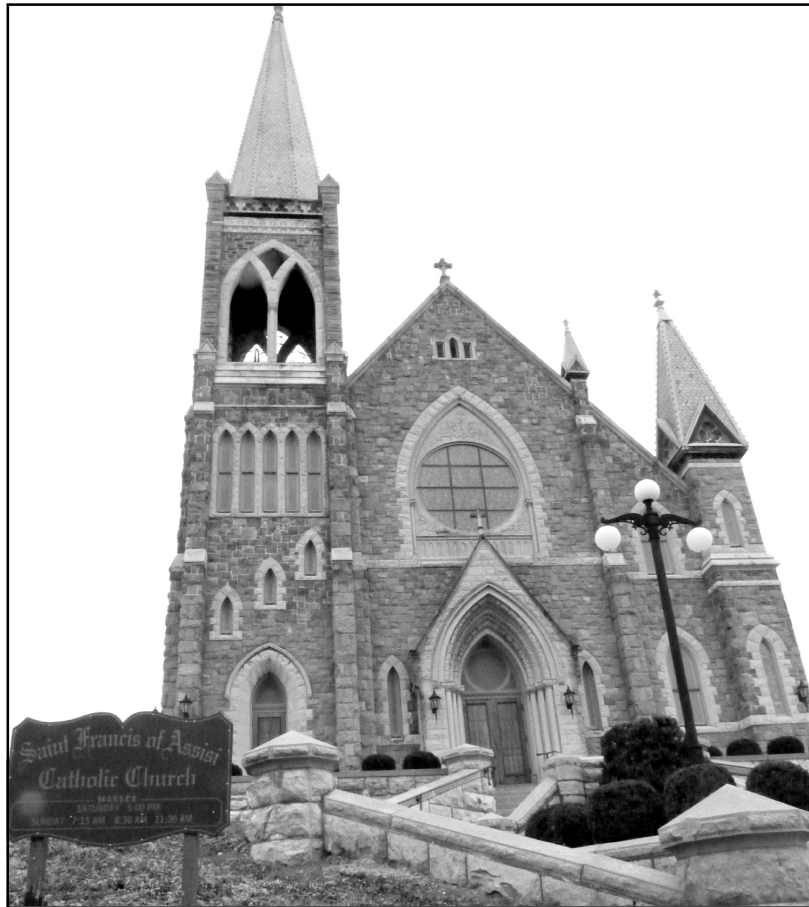
In July and August 1883, the quarry produced over 900 tons of building stone. However, with such high levels of production and use, the serpentine stone soon began to show its inherent weakness. Orders for building stone began to decline in the later 1890's, and the quarry was abandoned in 1900.

Review of Maintenance History

St. Francis Church provided access to their maintenance files so that the current planning could be informed by prior efforts. While other work may have taken place and not been included in this file, the relevant work identified was as follows:



- 1895 Original construction
- 1960s Replacement of stone on bell tower (bell vibrations caused damage)
- 1968 Masonry and waterproofing repairs including complete repointing and silicone coating (Conley Bros.)
- 1970s Spot repointing
- 1974 Proposal to recoat building with waterproofing (Colonial Restoration—not sure if accepted)
- 1984 Silicone coating applied to stone (Colonial Restoration)
- 1984 Gutter repairs (John Karaffa)



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church



A Short History of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church **By Hampton H. Hairfield, Jr. (updates from Alexa Kempson)**

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, located at 125 North Augusta, Staunton, Virginia, is proud of its rich heritage. Parishioners encountered many difficulties before this majestic church could be established and make a mark in the community. In early Virginia all churches had to conform to Anglican edicts. Furthermore, there was prejudice against Catholics because of fear of their political loyalty. In 1647, Giles Brent, a former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, and some of his family and friends, devout Catholics, settled along Aquia Creek in Stafford County. In 1786, Jefferson's bill providing complete religious freedom helped to encourage Catholic settlements. Also, the support that the French Catholics gave to the French generals during the Revolutionary War improved the attitude toward Catholics. George Washington paid tribute to these Catholic soldiers at the end of this war.

By 1830 Irish Catholic immigration had increased as a result of crop failures and persecution in Ireland. However, in 1841 there were less than a dozen Catholics in Staunton. The Rev. Dr. Daniel Downey, a native of Ireland, came to Staunton to celebrate Mass in the home of Michael Quinlan. In 1845 Staunton was made a pastorate with Charlottesville, Lexington, Harrisonburg, and Waynesboro many years later becoming missions. Thus, Staunton was the Mother of Catholicism in the Shenandoah Valley.

In 1841 Michael Quinlan, and ancestor of Dolores Quinlan Lescure (a very prominent twentieth-century Staunton citizen, including serving as city mayor), gave the parish land for the building of a church for one dollar. In 1851 a church in Gothic Revival Style with green shutters, two stoves and a fence was built.

In 1867 a parochial school was established for the children of the 600 Catholics in this area. In 1873 the present rectory was built. By 1878 the Daughters of Charity arrived to run the school. The school was responsible for producing many prominent leaders. Among the many familiar names are Beardsworth, Cacciapaglia, Bergin, Hanna, Hassett, Hickman, Kilgalen, Kivlighan, McMeer, McCarrick, Meredith, Mitchell and Ridenour. Some of these were leaders in the community and others were priests and nuns who spread the Gospel of Christ in its entirety, as it has passed through the Apostles in an uninterrupted sequence.



By 1885 as a result of the growth of the church, a larger building was needed. The cornerstone of the present edifice was laid on September 10, 1895. The architect was T.J. Collins, a parishioner and architect of many historic buildings in Staunton. It is of English Gothic style with pointed arches both inside and outside, leading worshipers to fill their minds with thoughts of the heavenly throne of God.

While establishing itself as a congregation, the parish has consistently been involved in the community. In the 1930s the priest would travel miles to the many Civilian Conservation Corps camps. During World War II the church responded to the pleas for help from the USO and the Red Cross. In 1971 two nuns established the Staunton Area Churches Relief Association (SACRA).

On October of 1995, Bishop Walter Sullivan presided over the opening of a yearlong Jubilee celebration of the church's 150th anniversary. Over the past several years, the parish has seen the development of new ministries; the institution of Perpetual Adoration, the establishment of a Catholic school (which is now closed.) This was an actual Catholic school on the property. The nuns lived in the convent, which faced onto Augusta Street. The school faced on New Street. The parish engaged in a "Millennium Renovation Project" in 2000. Some of the old deteriorated structures between the convent and school were torn down to build Assisi Hall, which now links the old convent to the old classrooms. The old schoolrooms became our offices and another smaller meeting hall, Columbian Hall, was created. To get an idea of how the buildings were situated on the property: In Assisi Hall, the brick wall is the original exterior wall of the convent. At the opposite end of Assisi Hall is a set of double doors opening into a stairway. The stairwell is an addition of the Millennium Project and links Assisi Hall to the new offices. So the current offices are where the schoolrooms used to be. Upstairs over the offices is a large room called Columbian Hall that was the school's cafeteria/auditorium. Also, the project added Sacred Page, a privately owned bookstore on the grounds

The purchase of two adjoining houses also enlarged the parish property. Right next to the church building at 205 N Main is an old residence that now houses SACRA and two private apartments. Next to this is the old Baumgartner [Bumgardner] House (209 N. Main) that the parish now uses for religious education classes. That is now called St. Clare House.



Interesting findings in the Augusta County court records

By Greg Crawford (local records manager,
Library of Virginia) and staff

Editor's Note: In the summer of 2011, the Library of Virginia local records management staff, gave a presentation at the Staunton Public Library about the preservation and posting on the World Wide Web of courthouse records from Staunton and Augusta County. In their presentation they highlighted some of the more interesting cases. What follows is a copy of that presentation for the Augusta County records. The 2012 Bulletin will feature the Staunton records. As documents are scanned, they will be posted on the Library of Virginia's website. You can keep up with the progress by going to http://www.virginiamemory.com/blogs/out_of_the_box/2012/02/03/not-in-my-backyard-2/.

Sometime in the early nineteenth century, a young lawyer, possibly David Ruffin from Washington College (now Washington and Lee), visited the Augusta County Courthouse to examine the court records. His original purpose for doing so may have been to prep for a suit he was involved in or to research for a term paper for law school. As he opened the suits found in the countless bundles filed in the courthouse, he began to notice references to the "Indian war," the American Revolution, and Louisiana Purchase. He saw the names of early pioneers who settled not just in Augusta County but the entire Shenandoah Valley: Bordens, Harmans, Stuarts, McClenechans, etc. He may have seen suits that originated in places other than Augusta County such as Greenbrier County, Kanawha County, Frederick County, and Lee County. On that day, Mr. Ruffin learned that the Augusta County court records were more than just legal suits over debt, land, estates, and slave property. They contained the history of Augusta County. This discovery lit a passion in Ruffin to learn more about the history of Augusta County and its people.



He made regular visits to the courthouse to read the bills of complaints, petitions, depositions, and reports found in the court records. Ruffin poured over the stories of people migrating from one place to another; battles with hostile natives; slaves seeking freedom; land speculation booms and busts. At some point, Ruffin had an epiphany, which prompted him to write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper. He wrote:

Mr. Editor. Led by a love for the early history of our hardy ancestors to search the records of our courts from the formation of the county up to later times for the purpose of gleaning from them what scraps of history I might there find. I have frequently fallen upon documents of a most interesting character. In the time worn and musty old folios long since filed away in our public offices, there is many a fact recorded that has occurred under the personal observation of no one now living; and which if placed within the reach of the public, would go farther to give us a knowledge of the manners, customs, and character of the pioneers of Augusta than all the histories that have been written on our native state.

And what I now propose is that, if you will spare me weekly "one little nook or corner" of your sheet I will, with the assistance of a young friend, a member of my profession, collect and prepare for the public such historical facts and anecdotes as have not heretofore appeared in print, illustrative of the early history of Augusta County, under the following title, viz.

Historical Scraps of Augusta By a young "limb of the Law."

The Library of Virginia has the same ambition and goal as Mr. Ruffin. Instead of doing it through a newspaper column, we are doing it through the World Wide Web with the Chancery Records Index and Out of the Box blog both found at virginiamemory.com. Images of the city of Staunton chancery causes are available for viewing on the CRI. We are presently scanning the Augusta County chancery causes and adding images to the CRI once they have been finalized. We will make announcements through the Out of the Box blog and listservs regarding the addition of the latest Augusta County images to the CRI. All 10,000+ suits should be available for viewing by the end of 2012.

In the meantime, the Local Records archival staff put together a list of suits of interest they identified in the Augusta County chancery (including the one that contains Mr. Ruffin's letter to the editor.) Hopefully, they will give you the same enthusiasm for the history of Augusta County that they did Mr. Ruffin over a century ago and prompt you to want to learn more when the suits become available on the CRI.

Greg Crawford, Local Records Manager, Library of Virginia

1 page

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Historical Scraps of Augusta.
By a young "limb of the Law."

As is perhaps generally known in the County, that Augusta was until the year 1798, the 12th

The letter to the editor found in the Augusta County Chancery Causes.



Suits of interest found in the Augusta County Chancery Causes

1752-006: Thomas West v. Ex. of Benmjamin Borden,, etc.: Included in this suit is a bond of performance to Arthur Baret of Orange County for 850 acres of land and if the survey shows a problem with the 850 acres, Borden will refund some of the money Mr. Baret paid for the land. The bond is dated 23 January 1739/40. Both men were living in Orange County at the time of the bond.

1763-001: Jeremiah Seely vs. Joseph Carpenter etc.: Joseph Carpenter is Jeremiah Seely's father-in-law and had given him bonds to use to buy land near said Joseph. Because of the French and Indian War being fought in the area of Jeremiah's home, he moved his family to Maryland during the conflict. When he returned he found that Joseph had given his land to John Mann. Jeremiah sued to get the land back.

1768-003: William Foster vs. Exrs of James Patton: In John Buchanan's answer to the Bill, he states that Col. Patton was killed sometimes in the year of 1755. He had intended to take out a patent for land on the New River but got in a dispute with the Governor over a fee of a pistole for signing the patents which Patton and others refused to pay. Patton was killed by the Indians on the Frontier while he was in the service of the Government during the Indian War. Before Patton's death, the Governor hindered Patton and others from settling and getting patents on lands on the waters of the Mississippi River. The people were told to withdraw from that area.

1768-008: Samuel Akerling vs. Valentine Zinn etc.: Samuel's brother lived on the Frontier of the Colony upon the waters of the Yawyawganie. In the last war he was taken prisoner by the Indians and his house was burned. Garret Zinn had bought land from the brother. Garret took his family to North Carolina to prevent them from being murdered in the last war. He died there and Valentine Zinn is his son and heir at law.

1770-003: John Smith vs. Exrs of James Patton. John Smith formed a company in 1741 with Zacariah Lewis, William Waller, Ben Waller, Robert Green, and James Patton to take up and survey 100,000 acres between the waters of the James River and the Roanoke River. James Patton over time bought out the shares from the partners and got his own grant



for the land. John Smith had surveyed the land and wanted payment. Patton also offered him a sixth part of Zachariah Lewis' land. This suit was an effort to settle John Smith and James Patton's business arrangements. From reading the bill, one can infer that John Smith was captured by the French and Indians in 1756 and held until 1758.

1771-009: Halbert McClure vs. James McClure, etc.: This cause contains depositions about what happened at a sale of Nathaniel McClure's land. There was drinking and accusations that it was not a valid sale.

1774-007: John Ramsey, Jr. vs. Hugh McClure. John and Hugh wanted to buy land in the Beverley Manor. The suit talks about the travels and business dealing that it took for them to get the land they wanted.

1786-001: Joseph Bell etc. vs. John Francis: William Bell's father David Bell wanted to buy land from Mr. Francis. Mr. Francis wanted to buy a slave. Mr. Bell promised to go to Maryland and buy a slave for a lower price. Unfortunately, when Mr. Bell arrived in Maryland, the price of slaves had grown and he did not purchase a slave. This suit concerns the disagreement that resulted because Mr. Bell did not buy a slave.

1786-002: James Hayes vs. George Berry: This suit concerns the purchase of a slave named Rachel who ran away and the purchase of a slave named China in her place.

1787-006: William Bell etc. vs. Daniel Ofriel etc.: William and Samuel Bell, Daniel Ofriel and John Cunningham agreed to purchase beef and pork for the Albemarle Barracks. They encountered much difficulty, including snow, but finally bought the animals in Halifax County, NC. Lots of depositions are included in this folder.

1789-001: Richard Mathews vs. John Campbell: Richard Mathews agreed to sell John Campbell salt and deerskins. The price of salt fell and things got bad. There are business letters from 11 September 1781 through March 2, 1786 included in the folder.

1794-011: John Fudge vs. Benajah Thompson: John Fudge purchased slaves Libby and Will for Mr. Thompson. There was a disagreement over



how much he had paid and how much he owed. It turned out “Libby” and “Will” were really “Kitty” and “Billy”, mulatto children of Sarah Otway. The Church Wardens of Littleton Parish in Cumberland County had bound them to Benajah Thompson in August 1775. Benjamin Wilson, a Justice of the Peace, gave a statement that the two children were free persons and that they were carried out of the county by Bartlet Thompson.

1796-007: Alexander Stuart vs. Samuel McChesney: Samuel McChesney and his father-in-law Samuel Herring were involved in buying servants from on consignment in 1787. This suit has copies of accounts.

1796-008: James Kelzo etc. vs. Samuel McChesney: James Kelzo, James Wilson and Samuel Chesney purchased servants together. The Bill lists the name of some of the servants: Darby Hart, Martin Supple, John Haley, Pierce Jenkins, Bridget O Daniel and Elizabeth Insol. The answer names some of the people who bought the servants and Hines and Kelly, two of the servants. There is information about the servants in the accounts. One account gives the names of over thirty servants.

1802-018: Joseph Stover etc. vs. John Crockwell. There were two lotteries held to get money to build a Lutheran Church in Strasburg, Shenandoah County. The cause concerns the mistakes the people running the lotteries made.

1803-047: James Bayley (Bailey) vs. Andrew Moore. James Bailey was described in the depositions of Cornelius Dorman and James Gold as a man whose principle support came from “horses jockeying, buying, selling, swapping, & trading in other properties” and they “believe he is capable of taking any advantage in his power to accomplish without respect to Justice...” This cause concerns a gray horse that was said to be blind.

1803-089: James McMeechen vs Exr. of James Rumsey: James Rumsey according to the Bill “was versed in the Doctrines of Hydrostatics, central forces, and the Law of gravitation” and came up with an invention that was a steam boiler that could be used to cause improvement to Doctor Barkers Mill. A group of men formed a Rumseyan Society in



1784 to help pay for the experiments of Mr. Rumsey's invention. They hoped that Mr. Rumsey's invention would be able make "boats sail against rapid streams". Mr. Rumsey eventually moved to London and the suit includes letters written from London in 1789, 1791 and 1792. There is one letter dated 1788 written in Philadelphia just before he left for London. The letters talk about ship building, the building of a canal in Ireland, the situation in France and other interesting remarks.

1804-051: Joseph A. Smith etc. vs. George Black (alias George Schwartz): There was a fight at George Black's Tavern that Mr. Black claimed resulted from Joseph A. Smith and Jacob Keller being drunk and attacking him. Mr. Black claims they broke his leg. The jury in Shenandoah County believed his account of the event. Mr. Smith and Mr. Keller have a different story about the event and they are suing in the Chancery District Court to have the County Court verdict overturned.

1804-068: Edward Kennedy vs. Joas Miller and Rebecca Miller, his daughter: Joas and Rebecca obtained two judgments against Edward for getting her pregnant. Edward took the case to the High Court of Chancery to get an injunction against the judgments. Edward and his witnesses said the neighborhood men took great liberties with Rebecca and her sisters. The Millers' witnesses said Rebecca and her sisters were well behaved. There are at least fourteen depositions.

1804-133: Thomas Grigg etc. vs. Abram Davenport etc. This cause concerns the selling of the Glebe Land of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Norborne Parish (Norbourn Parish) by the Overseers of the Poor for Jefferson County (and Norbourn Parish).

1805-005: William Bryan vs. Lewis Bible etc. William Bryan's brother Morgan was considered a lunatic. There are numerous depositions about his behavior. This cause gives information about how society dealt with people who were insane.

1805-041: Elizabeth Russell vs. John Doyell etc.: John Doyall sold Elizabeth land on 23 February 1795. She discovered that he did not own the land. He sued her to get her to pay all of her bond for the land. She sued for an injunction in 1799. She was back in court in 1803, at which time the land he sold her was surveyed and the true owners proved ownership.



1805-043: Rep(s) of Gen. Thomas Nelson vs.. Nathaniel Burwell, trst., etc.: Dispute over western Virginia property owned by Gen. Thomas Nelson – signer of the Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary War hero, and governor of Virginia. Nelson’s last will and testament is an exhibit in the suit.

1805-090: Trst(s) of Washington Academy vs. Robert Gold: In 1803, Washington Academy burned down. The inhabitants of Lexington wanted to rebuild the Academy in Lexington. Robert Gold sold them the land but problems arose about getting water for the academy from a spring on the other side Mr. Gold’s property. There is a copy of the Rector and Trustees minutes from the meeting concerning the arrangements made for the new buildings in Lexington. There is a copy of the minutes concerning getting the water for the Academy. (Washington Academy eventually became Washington and Lee University.)

1806-030: George Mitchell vs. Trst(s) of William Bowyer: George Mitchell bought land at a trustee sale of William Bowyer’s land. Jacob Kinney, the trustee would never give him a deed for the land. Mr. Mitchell searched for the land and could not find it. Mr. Mitchell concluded that there was not any land. Mr. Kinney had obtained a judgment against Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Mitchell obtained an injunction in April 1806. There is a copy of a deed, dated 29 August 1806 for the land that was used as an exhibit.

1806-059: Thomas Boydstone vs. Abraham Sheppard etc. Thomas Boydstone purchased land from two men who had obtained Northern Neck Land Grants from Lord Fairfax. Thomas Caton had received his grant for 196 acres on 31 May 1751 and Vacheal Metcalf (Medcalfe) had received a grant for 300 acres on 7 January 1755. Boydstone bought 112 acres of the 300 acres grant. He did not have any problems about his land until 1791 when Abraham Sheppard sued to get ownership of his land. There had been a dispute between Lord Fairfax and the Crown. This cause gives a history of this dispute and other disputes over the patents and grants issued in that area of Virginia.

1807-001: Dev(s) of Francis Humphrey Christian vs. John S. Woodcock etc.: suit involves distribution of slaves.



1807-003: John Burton v. Exrs of David Laird etc: plaintiff indebted to defendant by mortgage on slaves to pay debt.

1807-006: John Crawford vs. Timothy Green etc: both parties made several surveys and entries on same land grant in state of Pennsylvania.

1807-015: John Craigen etc. vs. Michael Thorn etc.: land dispute involves Thomas Lord Fairfax, proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia, settling a very valuable tract of land lying on the south branch of the Potowmack River

1807-036: Rep(s) of Thomas Johnson vs. Exr of James Culbertson etc.: selling of valuable stud horse for 800 acres of military land.

1807-044: Richard Bruce vs. Ison Walton etc.: plaintiff gave deed of trust on four slaves. Defendant intended to "injure and oppress" plaintiff by advertising slaves for sale.

1807-047: James Houston vs. John Divisire: defendant visits plaintiff and offers to cure his cancer.

1807-051: Thomas Mitchell etc. vs. James Barnatt plaintiff sues defendant over possession of slave Rachel and her seven offspring

1807-054 and 1808-126: Alexander Nelson vs. George Mathews: in both suits plaintiff sues defendant Congressman Mathews from Georgia over land dispute.

1807-055: George Smiley vs. John Steele: freeing of slaves mentioned in 1792 will of John Parks from Rockbridge County.

1807-067: Col. William Robinson vs. Col. Arthur Campbell: land dispute on border between Virginia and North Carolina—where there was "no established line separating the two states."

1807-083: Joseph Smith vs. Thomas Helm: articles of agreement between plaintiff and defendant concerning rental of mill on Opecan creek in Frederick County.



1807-099: Agness Cunningham McCroy vs. David McCroy: early divorce suit involving charges of abuse and destitution.

1807-116: Edmond Pendleton, surv partner vs. James Davison: Pendleton was a surviving partner of Virginia's Loyal Company, influential land speculators, involved in many of Augusta's counties early chancery suits.

1807-151: Samuel Greenlee vs. Elizabeth Moore etc. and vice versa: involves the possession and lease by Robert E. Lee's father, Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee of a certain farm in Rockbridge County known as "Sidney Cove."

1807-152: Exrs of Michael Fackler and Peter Heiskell vs. Corporation of Staunton: violation of local ordinance against Heiskell for not opening a ditch to convey water to the town through his lot. Fackler at the time of his death had a lease and was in possession of mills on the stream from which said water is contemplated to be taken by the corporation. One of Fackler's executors is a nearby resident and the other serves as a member of the town's Common Council.

1808-025: Admr. of Jesse Payne vs. Agness Payne etc: involves disputed claims on slaves, defrauding creditors, selling slaves and attempting to get slaves back.

1808-029: James Thompson vs. Andrew Crockett: involves disputed claims on a horse known as "poor bay." Branding disputes, trials and judgments ensue.

1808-097: Jane Allison, by etc. vs. William Allison: involves plot to get rid of wife to state of Kentucky because she had become rendered helpless by severe rheumatism. Plot centers on a horse, some money and a letter sent by a mysterious individual.

1808-103: Dev(s) of Peter Conrad vs. Tobias Randolph McGahay and wife, etc.: large suit about the estate of Peter Conrad—lots of land and slaves.

1808-115: Nathaniel Craighill and Joseph Crane vs. Alexander White,



sheriff, etc.: sheriff is accused of fraud when plaintiffs sign indemnifying bond for one of his deputies and the plaintiffs are left to deal with the resulting debt.

1808-124: John Carter Littlepage vs. Admr. Of John Oliver etc.: Contract dispute over partnership in a public house at Hot Springs, Bath County, 1795; and profits of the labor of slaves purchased by partners. Includes detailed accounts of eighteenth century business in Bath County

1809-041: Margaret Bowyer, widow, etc, Margaret Lewis and Anthony Mustoe etc. vs. William Bowyer and Margaret Lewis: suit includes plat of Town of Warm Springs in Bath County.

1809-078: James McKerrey vs. Fontaine Maury etc.: defendant in suit served as mayor of Fredericksburg during the 1790s and early 1800s. At this time, he is now a merchant that apparently owes the plaintiff a quantity of butter and cheese.

1809-084: William Little vs. Thomas Flagg: involves the establishment of a public road—contains plats and petitions. The answer of one of the defendants sums up the history of the case quite nicely.

1809-088: Richard Price etc. vs. Peter Randolph: very interesting case of a mulatto petitioning for his freedom—involves assuming another person's identity. Individual was grandson to Lewis Randolph.

1809-095: John Hook vs. Nanny Pege.: involves freedom of slave and her children.

1809-158: William Ward vs. Rachael Skidmore: dispute over a supposed breach of marriage contract.

1809-163: George Jackson vs. William Robinson etc. and 1809-164: Stephen R. Wilson etc. vs. William Smith etc.: suits involve Indiana Land Company and latter suit involves Attorney General of Virginia.

1810-031: James Maxwell vs. Thomas Pickens etc.: involves plaintiff's daughters murdered by Indian. Land granted by Loyal Company.



1810-057: Robert Draffin vs. James Jarman etc.: involves purchase of slave.

1810-073: Major Dowell vs. James Bumgardner etc.: involves claiming slaves under the replevin law.

1810-076: George Poage etc. vs. James Brown etc.: involves settlement on Ohio River in the state of Kentucky.

1810-088: Fanny Harlow by etc. vs. Nathaniel Harlow: involves divorce by extreme cruelty. Husband has considerable wealth and court is last resort for plaintiff who after 40 years of marriage has nothing.

1810-138: William Lewis vs. Archibald Wood and vice versa: suit involves thousands of acres of military land in Kentucky.

1810-148: William McClung, Sr. vs. Andrew Moore: Andrew Moore was a member of Congress and VA State senator from 1804-1809. Involves disputed tracts of land in Greenbrier County, West Virginia.

1810-154: Joseph Watson, the younger vs. Elizabeth Longacre etc.: involves contesting will and land in Shenandoah County.

1810-155: Alexander Ashby vs. Henry Fry, Sr. etc.: involves selling of slaves.

1811-008: Robert Lewright v. Rep(s) John Hite combined with other suits heard at the same time: The will of John Hite of Berkeley County bequeaths land in Western District of Augusta County, mentions land acquired from Cherokee Indians

1811-018: William McClanahan etc. vs. Patterson Hannah. Migration — case concerns purchase of land on the Roanoke River in what became Botetourt County then Augusta, in 1757 by Erwin Patterson of New Castle, Delaware; family then moved on to Kentucky.

1811-025: George Britton vs. Washington I. Washington etc.: case concerns lots, former resident of town of Buckland in Prince William County.



1811-031: Andrew Moore vs. John Stuart etc.: Case contains letters, dated 1795, concerning surveying of western lands; one letter from Greenbrier County, 1795.

1811-032: Heir of John McDowell vs. Heirs of Benjamin Borden. Letter, 1795, from Greenbrier County, business of traveling west and surveying land.

1811-036: James Moseley vs. James McMurran etc.: Concerns business interests and trade with France, through Alexandria. Depositions from Oswego, New York, Alexandria, Hampshire County.

1811-049: Daniel Norcutt vs. Admr. of George Dillard: Contract dispute over terms of an agreement to hire two enslaved men to carry produce and other articles from Lynchburg and other places along the James River to Richmond.

1812-006: John Bollar, Sr. vs. William McClintie alias McClintock: Case contains multiple depositions about alleged mistreatment of an enslaved woman.

1812-017: Jane Beverley vs. John H. Hyde etc.: Case concerns a 5,000-acre estate in Botetourt containing "valuable ore banks" and iron works.

1812-042: William McMechen & James P. Heath vs. John H. Hyde etc.: Case involves sale of eighty slaves; marriage relationships are included in information on the slaves; two are identified as coliers.

1812-059: Andrew Anderson vs. John Fulk: plaintiff is a free man of color suing to get his wife back. His wife was taken in payment of a debt.

1813-054: Thomas Stuart vs. Heirs of John Duncan: Suit concerns dispute over a marriage contract, which is included in the case.

1813-085: James Logan vs. Molly~, etc.: The bill and affidavit describe the birth of a bastard mulatto child named Molly to a convict servant woman named Rose Fitzgerald, in Albemarle County in 1762 and 1763. The child, Molly, was bound by the parish to Joseph Kincaid until she



reached the age of 31. Robert Logan bought the time of the Molly, and when Robert Logan died his son James Logan inherited the time. James Logan let her go free when she turned 31. He sold the time of two sons, Marcus and Andrew, Molly had while she was bound to Logan to Moses Cawood of Washington County. In Washington County, Molly sued Logan for false imprisonment and damages, alleging she had never been bound legally to Joseph Kincaid, and she sued others for the freedom of three sons, Marcus, Andrew, and Joe. The jury awarded her damages and loss of time she had been legally confined, and on behalf of her sons. Logan appealed to the District Court but the court record from Washington County couldn't be found. The District Court reversed the decision concerning the sons, but not Molly, costing Logan \$700. Since that time, Logan found a witness, Andrew Greer, of Carter County, TN, who married a daughter of Joseph Kincaid, and Logan is now suing to stay the proceedings at law. Logan wins the case, and doesn't have to pay damages.

1813-069: Heirs of William Boon, Sr., vs. Joseph Gatewood, etc.: Case contains a copy of a 1754 proclamation from Governor Dinwiddie to encourage men to enlist in defense of the colony and help build a fort on the river Ohio...to oppose any further encroachments or hostile attempts of the French and the Indians in their interest,..."

1814-060: John McClenechan vs. Nester Harden: Case pertains to a land warrant granted in return for military service in the company of Charles Scott, present Governor of Kentucky, on a "Cherokee expedition" organized by Francis Fauquier in 1760. Several plats of land in Randolph County.

1814-072: William Coleman vs. David Richardson etc.: Case involves patents given to soldiers who fought under Washington in Braddock's War (French and Indian War). Contains numerous copies of land warrants issued to soldiers for their service in that war. Case also involves adjustments of claims to unpatented lands in the counties of Monongalia, Yohogania, and Ohio, 1783.

1814-097: William Stoneham, free man of color, vs. Administrator of George Stoneham: Plaintiff states that George Stoneham, in his lifetime, emancipated several of his children of color, of which plaintiff was



one, after a period of six years, to give him time to pay off claims that might be made against, them and to give them time to learn an industry to enable them to better make their way through the world. Deed of emancipation was made in 1806; George Stoneham died in 1807. Administrator is the son-in-law of the deceased.

1815-028: Audley Paul vs. William Cochran, Jr.: Bill describes an effort to arbitrate marital discord by two neighbors, who draw up a separation and alimony agreement.

1815-030: Frederick Idle vs. Philip Gaines etc. and other suits heard at the same time: The suits relate to a dispute between Idle, who brought a slave named Hagar to Virginia from Maryland in 1787, when she was a young girl, and Gaines, who bought rights to her from Idle's step-children, and debt. Case hinges on the location of the oath Idle is alleged to have signed when he brought Hagar to Virginia from Maryland. Idle accuses Gaines of trying to steal the oath he signed when he imported the slaves into Virginia, and petitions to have the suit moved from Grayson to Staunton; also accuses Gaines of trying to have Hagar liberated, so he won't have to give her up to Idle to pay a debt. Exhibits include record of charges of assault and battery made by Hagar against Frederick Idle. Numerous depositions. She sued on grounds she had been brought into Virginia illegally in 1787 by Philip Gaines, one of the defendants, in violations of the law passed in 1785 to prevent the importation of slaves. Court upheld the Grayson court finding that Hagar was a slave, and ordered Gaines to deliver her and her children to Idle, as found in the detinue (order to return property) issued by the Grayson County court.

1815-091: George Baylor vs. Mathias Link, etc.: contains a plat showing a diagram of pipes for carrying water to a distillery, a sawmill, and a meadow.

1816-053: Moses McClure vs. Edmund Edrington etc.: Forbids the sale of slaves

1816-074: Admr. of George Stoneham vs. Henry Stoneham: Many years before the death of the plaintiff, he formed an illicit connection with a woman of color his own slave by whom he had a number of children.



The defendant states that the death left little or no estate except the female Negroes aforesaid and her children all of whom he emancipated.

1816-078: Elisha Peters & wife vs. Lewis Nevil etc.: Slaves listed in the will.

1816-082: Moses Martin vs. James Ball etc: selling of a female slave.

1816-084: Dennis Sullivan & wife etc. vs. Dudley Jones: A slave was emancipated and others were listed in the will.

1817-014: William McCampbell vs. Heirs of Benjamin Borden, Sr. etc.: The bill of complaint of William McCampbell represents that a certain James McCown purchased from Benjamin Borden Sr. deceased four hundred acres of land, part of his large survey of 92,000 acres. A certain James Tribble who then acted as a surveyor in the county surveyed the said tract of land, beginning at white oak on the Southside of a Timberridge turning thence North ten degrees West one hundred and sixty poles to a black oak, thence South seventy six degrees East four hundred poles to a post by a Hickory sapling, thence South fourteen degrees East one hundred sixty poles to a post, thence North seventy six degrees West four hundred and ten poles to the beginning. The surveyor in setting down in his field notes the second course of the said survey, through mistake as your orator alleges insisted the letter N instead of the letter S so that the course according to the abbreviation manner usual with surveyors, would read North seventy six degrees East instead of South so many degrees East. The error not being discovered at the time of your orator alleges a deed was written in which the said second course was inserted according to the error aforesaid.

1817-036: Robert Campbell etc. vs. Samuel Reed & wife etc.: selling of slaves

1817-037: Heirs of John Dunlop vs. Exrs. of John Dunlop: Slaves to be sold if they refuse to live with Ann Dunlop's children and a will stating that Ben be sold

1817-049: William Harris & wife vs. David Maupin: Selling of a slave

1817-050: John Craig Frame vs. Exrs. of Samuel Frame: Selling of slaves



1817-053: Alexander Henderson vs. Luther Martin etc.: selling of slaves

1817-084: Daniel Tilman vs. Elizabeth Christian, widow etc.: after the slave was sold; she gave birth to several children.

1817-104: John Hays & c by etc. vs. John Hays etc.: Slaves listed in the will.

1817-106: Elisha Griffith vs. Arthur Trader: Your orator sold two negro girls to Arthur Trader. Trader took the girls to Alleghania County, Md.. and encamped in the woods and followed hunting for a livelihood, etc.

1817-108: Littleton Waddel and Wife va. Gdn. of John Edmondson: Sold slaves and replaced them with the money by the purchase of other young slaves, etc.

1818-019: Samuel Black & wife vs. Elizabeth Meek, widow, etc.: slave expected to be sold.

1818-029: Exr. of Thomas Carr vs. Exrs. of Samuel Carr: sale of slave.

1818-031: Andrew Hunter vs. John Adair, etc.: the defendant moved to another state leaving two slaves and another person with his brother without making any provisions known to the plaintiff.

1818-032: Daniel Higginbotham vs. Hudson M. Garland etc.: purchased a slave.

1818-042: Benjamin Hawkins & wife vs. Admx. of Mountz Byrd etc.: slaves listed on inventory list.

1818-043: Robert Lewis vs. Nelson Barksdale & James Minor: Robert Lewis made a contract with a certain Nelson Bardsdale acting as agent for a certain James Minor for the purchase of a slave by the name of Will. The orator charges that the slave was represented and warranted to you to be of good character and that in consequences of said warranty and agreement to deliver the negro to him at the plantation in Albemarle Co. The orator charges that since the said contract, he re-



ceived a report from the neighborhood from whence he was brought that he was a slave of most infamous character, he being a notorious nuisance, a rogue and other issues too tedious to mention.

1818-060: Admr. of Alexander Campbell vs. Stephen R. Price: The orator has been deputy to Alexander Campbell (surveyor of the county) from 1795 or 1796 until his death and when your orator made a return of the surveys he made to said Alexander Campbell (which was generally done once each year) they divided the fees between them (that is) your orator kept as many of the fees to collect himself as amounted to his share with what he had received in had when he made the surveys (which was generally a very small sum) and the said Campbell receive his share to collect himself and, etc.

1818-061: Solomon Ritchey (free man of color) vs. Frederick Painter: That a certain Frederick purchased of a Walter Frazer a tract of land 160 acres and agreed to pay therefore to Frazer the sum of \$168.00. The sum of money according to a contract with Frazer, applied to your orator to advance him of money for that purpose and promised your orator that he would give to him as his security of the said money due him advanced, 45 acres of the aforesaid tract of land. The orator thinking he would be in so doing although ignored in such matters, he did advance toward the payment of the land \$147.00 as will more fully, be appear by the article, etc.

1818-062: Devs. of Jacob Lockhart vs. Robert Rennick etc.: the orator's father was unfortunately killed by Indians around the spring of 1806 before he perfected his title to the said land under the settlement certificate. After the death of Robert Rennick he became guardian to Jacob's devisees.

1818-076: Benjamin Store vs. William Long: Mutually engaged in milling business in consequence of the said William having intermarried, with a certain Elizabeth Callaway, widow of James Callaway deceased with whom your orator had formerly transacted the said business and upon the same terms and conditions (that is to say) each party to pay equal proportions of expenses and share equally of the profits arising there from, but so it is, may it please your worships; the books, papers and in short, every document appertaining to the said concern having fallen into the hands of



said William (hereafter) called defendant your orator after repeated applications and solicitations has never as yet been permitted to examine and investigate the same, but from some very partial and equivocal extracts which rather from accident than otherwise has fallen into the hands of your orator from which alone he has been enabled together with his own recollections of said transaction to discover considerable evidence of fraud and imposition in so much that your said orator believes that so far from the said defendant having an honest intention that he should share his just and equal proportion of said profits, that the said defendant has been, etc.

1818-078: Stephen Wanless vs. James Blake etc.: Stephen took advantage of James Blake then his neighbor and entered with the said surveyor 175 acres or thereabout, adjoining your orator's land. Blake and Wanless, in order to keep up that mutual good understanding that had therefore existed between them, to submit the matter in controversy to the decision of two of their clergymen to wit, William Word and Philip Kennedy, who undertook at the request of the said Blake and Wanless to settle the same and whose decisions on hearing the matters alleged on both sides that your orator agreeing to pay a certain proportion of the expense of survey and carrying the same into grant, etc.

1818-083: John Gold vs. John Buchanan & John Bowyer: The defendant states that he employed the other defendant to act in the capacity of an overseer at his farm and Buchanan was not authorized to make contracts for this defendant neither was he permitted to purchase supplies for the used of the farm or the negroes thereon that in some instances the other defendant did make arrangements for the used of this defendant farm which this defendant complied with, but did not consider himself bound to do so that he especially forbid the other defendant from dealing with the plaintiff on my account.

1818-099: Gdn. Of John Edmondson vs. Exr. of John Edmonson: Case contains a chart documenting the hiring of slaves belonging to the estate of John Edmondson in 1810. Chart includes the name of slaves, as well as family information such as "son of"; to whom hired, securities, and sums.

1818-100: Admr. of Joseph Morrison, Heirs of Eve Lackey, Heirs of William Morrison, and Devs. of Samuel Ayres vs. James Franklin: Did not sell Slaves, but laid off in lots as equal as possible.



1819-001: Hudson M. Garland vs. Allen Bugg: The orator made a contract with the defendant for the sale of three negroes and they were to be delivered to him when the purchase money was paid and the defendant failed to pay the purchase money within the time prescribed by the contract. The orator deemed it his right to dispose of the negroes in such a manner as he might think proper, and that the only obligation that remained on him was to return to the defendant that portion of the purchase money he paid.

1819-010: James Craig vs. Peter Moore: The orator humbly complaining to your honor that in 1810 and some time previous thereto he was the owner of a valuable stud horse named Soratis. This horse was the property of your orator. He kept the horse one season in Orange and Rockingham counties. Against his performance as a foal getter he never heard any complaints, while he remained the property of your orator. Peter Moore, a brother in law of your orator who was well acquainted with the horse, became very obvious of purchasing him.

1819-014: President of the College of William & Mary vs. Alexander Herring: The defendant being appointed surveyor for the county of Rockingham with a reservation in his commission to the said College of the sixth part of the legal fees that should be received by the said defendant and having at the date aforesaid given his bond according to the Act of Assembly in such cases made and provided conditioned for the faithful payment in October of each year of one sixth part of all his fees and profits for surveying and conditional also to render to the Treasurer of the college for the time being a true and faithful account upon oath of all surveyors, stops and times made by him the said defendant or his deputies and what fees the parties employing him should pay which bond is hereto annexed as part of your orators bill of complaint and in conveyance. The said defendant proceeded in the executor of his office and your orators further show unto your honor that your orator some years ago instituted their suit in the honorable court and obtained a decree for the amount of fees due to the said college up to the 1st. day of July 1805, which decree did not embrace the fees for surveyors made under orders of court all which will more fully appear reference being made to the proceedings in the suit which your orators refer to. Your orators further show unto your honor that since the 1st day of July 1805 the said defendant hath rendered no account lot even of the surveys performed by him or his deputies which is contrary to equity and good conscience.



1819-022: William Bailey vs. Griffin C. Garner: The orator sold to the defendant a negro slave named Phil, through the means of Henry Dawson who was a legally authorized agent as to the sale of the said negro. The said defendant executed to your orator two several bonds, one for \$100 payable on the 1st. of April 1806 and the other for \$250 gallons of whiskey to be delivered at the store of Morris & Moore then being in the county of Amherst, which delivery of the whiskey was to take place about the same times as will as your orator recollects that the bond for money became due, etc.

1819-025: Moses Hart vs. Robert Houston & William Davidson: the orator lost his pocket book on the highway and he thinks he had seven hundred and thirty dollars and bank notes. Two or three days after losing his pocket book, he set up several adventures in the neighborhood, of which he has marked as exhibit A. The pocket book was found by the Robert Houston. The said Robert was seen to pass along the road on which the pocket book was lost very early next morning and is the first person who was seen to pass. The said Robert has been known for years to have very little money at command and to have had his property sacrificed at sheriff and constables sale for want of money, etc.

1819-049: William W. Henning vs. Exr. of James Hays: William Henning purchased a sorrel mare of a certain Elijah Hogg for twenty-eight pounds, payable in bonds, for which he gave his obligation to the said Hogg to which obligation now filed in the clerk's office of Albemarle County. He refers for the date of the contract and prays that the same may be taken as a part of this bill. At the time when he made the payment to Hogg, he told your orator that he had not met the obligation of your orator about him, but that he would either bring it to him the next time he came to Charlottesville, or destroy it. The said James Hays, as your orator was informed, was well satisfied that the said obligation of your orator had been discharged, but thought a suit thereon in the Court of Albemarle County in order to charge the said Hogg as endorser. The process was served on your orator just as he was about to move to Richmond and he left the original receipt aforesaid, with Walter Leake, Esquire. Your orator remained undefended and as he has been informed a judgment passed against him without the production of the said receipt or any defense whatever having been made. Your orator has never uttered to



the clerk of the court of Albemarle and to the gentleman with whom he was informed.

1819-063: Sherod Martin vs. Admx. of Jacob Spiece, etc.: Sherod Martin was in need of money and obtained the loan of two hundred dollars from Jacob Spiece in order to secure a bill of sale to said Spiece on two negroes to wit "Sarah and Billy and delivered possession of said, negroes. There was a clause in the bill of sale that if the money was not paid within one month that the said negroes were to be forfeited for two hundred dollars. Although they were worth much more than that sum, your orator however procured the whole amount of principal and interest and actually offered to pay it within the month or time mentioned, but since Spiece refused to receive it and deliver up the said negroes and continue to hold them until his death. Your orator commenced suits in court against Spiece in his lifetime, but he died before the bill was filed and his widow Sally has obtained letters of administration on his estate and continued to hold the negroes under the said Bill of Sale as her husband did in his lifetime, all which acts and doings are contrary to equity and good conscience and tend to the injury and oppression of your orator who is without relief except in a court of equity.

1819-075: John Sheets vs. Alexander Fitzpatrick: Sheets entered into an agreement with Alexander Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick should take possession of a farm of your orator that your orator should make an effort to produce water by means of a well; that the said Fitzpatrick should board the well-digger, the residence of your orator being too far distance to board him with conveniences. The said Fitzpatrick however did not move on the farm of your orator until August. Your orator not expecting the delay employed a well-digger whom he had to discharge without any effect in his search for water in consequence of the failure of Fitzpatrick to provide convenient boarding and lodging for the workman. Both parties entered into a written agreement that the said Fitzpatrick should put up on the premises, a house fit for the use of a gunsmith shop, which your orator was to pay a reasonable price. Fitzpatrick failed this part of the agreement. He put up a small and miserable hut which he used as a cabin for his slaves, but which was altogether unfit for the purpose for which Fitzpatrick knew it was to be appropriated and for which he had expressly agreed to prepare it.



1819-078: Thomas Dillard vs. Samuel G. Dawson: Dillard purchased of Samuel Dawson a negro named Caroline, for four hundred and fifty dollars, of which your orator paid Dawson at the time of the purchase eleven pounds and executed to him his bond for the balance, payable March 1, 1817. The slave was purchased by your orator for a house servant and he was induced to become the purchaser and to give the price above mentioned, which he considered high, by the representation of the said Dawson, who aforesaid your orator that she was a very valuable winch and that she was perfectly sound and healthy as much as any in the county.

1819-079: John Patterson vs. William Caruthers etc.: Bill of sale of a negro woman.

1819-085: Joseph Gray and wife vs. Margaret Blaine.: Your orator and oratrix Joseph Gray and wife, that your oratrix Margaret is the daughter of William Blaine and Margaret Blaine of Ireland. The said William Blaine was lawfully married to Margaret Blaine whose maiden name was Stephenson and had by her two daughters to wit your oratrix Margaret and Nancy Blaine married to one James Hannegan. Many years ago, William Blaine, from the same cause with which your orator and oratrix are not well informed, left Ireland leaving there his wife and her sister and migrated to the United States. The said William eventually settled in the town of Salem. After coming to this country, he married a woman named Elizabeth Thompson. His wife, the mother of your oratrix then living in Ireland and continued to live with the said Elizabeth Thompson until her death which happened about three or four years since about eighteen months since the said William Blaine married Elizabeth Hook with whom he continued to live until his death which happened last year. Your orator and oratrix state it as a fact which they are able to prove that as the time of this marriage with Elizabeth, his first wife Margaret was still alive and living in Ireland and known by the said Blaine to be alive. Your orator and oratrix would show unto your worship that the said Elizabeth Hook pretending to be the wife of the said Blaine has taken possession of his real property in and near the town of Salem consisting of houses and lots and between fifty and sixty acres of land.



1819-096: Heirs of John Chiswell vs. Charles L. Christian, etc.: Selling of a slave.

1819-100: Duncan Henry vs. Admr. of Martin Shearman, etc.: Slave listed in the will.

1820-008: Richard A. Bryan vs. Samuel Mynes: Selling of a slave.

1820-013: Samuel Cunningham vs. James McNutt etc.: The orator (blacksmith) who was at the time an overseer of the poor took an apprentice a boy about seven years old named James Davis. Davis lived with your orator about two years as an apprentice, but was too young to learn anything of the trade, not being large enough even to blow the balloons. During this time, he was clothed and fed by your orator and treated with kindness and gave him attention. Davis started running off into the neighborhood and loitering about from place to place staying away from home for several days and nights. In order to break him of this vicious practice, your orator frequently threatened the boy telling him that the bears would catch him. At length, your orator would whip him.

1820-023: Jamers Gibbs purchased 3 slaves.

1820-036: John Taber vs. John Beasley, etc.: the plaintiff purchased a mare from the defendants only to find out that the mare was blind.

1820-038: Samuel Black, etc. vs. Thomas S. Coalter: The orator purchased a saw mill in the county and he found that the steam which gave it motion was rather small to make it as useful as has desired.

1820-039: Exr. of Mary Mackey (alias Mary Little) vs. William Mackey: Your orator represents that the said testatrix, besides other property, left a chest, in which were deposited various papers belonging to herself and also various papers belonging to the estate of John Mackey deceased of whom she was executrix and of which she had the custody as such besides some lien of the property of said Mary. There was also deposited in the said trunk a sum of money belonging to Mary. The said chest at the time of Mary's death was in her dwelling house. Shortly after Mary's



death, William Mackey took possession of the said chest, together with the papers linen and money and removed the same from the house and still has it in his possession.

1820-048: Andrew Moore vs. Major Dowell: Your orator became indebted to Major Dowell for the hire of negroes.

1820-054: William & Thomas Henry (free men of color) vs. Andrew Moore, etc.: Slaves to be emancipated and set free.

1820-057: Thomas Newell vs. Henry Wax: Your orator purchase of a certain Henry Wax a negro named Reuben.

1820-066: Admr of James Mitchell vs. Exors of : Slaves listed in the will and one set free.

1820-070: Thomas Mann Randolph vs. Thomas Watson: Watson hired from Randolph a sizeable number of slaves.

1820-071: Mathias Swink vs. Silas H. Smith: Smith who became the master of John Darsinger an imported white servant and a native of Germany who in 1818 was bound by indentures to serve Smith for three years. In the month of March of the same year, Smith sold the servant to Swink for \$100.

1822-080: William Wilson vs. Thomas Mayberry, etc.: Suit surrounds the purchase of property in Botetourt County by Mayberry and Weaver from Wilson for the purpose of establishing an iron works business. References to Retreat Furnace, Etna Furnace, and Union Forge. Background info on the iron works. Defendants claim to have been defrauded. Property was not as advertised.

1823-070: Andrew Lammie vs. Thomas Tate etc.: Case involves a title dispute for land surveyed by the Loyal Co. The original bill of complaint refers to James Anderson, who settled on Cove Creek, a branch of the North Fork of the Holstein, 1770 or 1771 and was killed by the Indians in the year 1774. Contains 5 plats.

1824-015: Isaac Freeman (a slave) vs. Exrs. of James Boyd etc.: Freedom



suit. Isaac was the son of a free negro named Derry Freeman and a slave to John Milles of Botetourt County. Derry attempted to purchase his son's freedom but did not have sufficient funds to do so. He convinced John Beale to purchase his son from Mills. Derry would then purchase his son from Beale. Beale died and Isaac became the property of Beale's widow. Derry still unable to raise funds to purchase his son. Derry died leaving a will, which is found in the suit. In it, he directed his executor James Boyd to procure the emancipation of Isaac. Isaac claimed that there were more than sufficient funds from his father's estate to purchase his freedom, but Boyd failed to do so although he wanted to. Boyd died. Isaac suing Boyd's executors and Beale's representatives in order to get the \$450 necessary for his freedom. Court judged in Isaac's favor. Isaac was represented by a negro named Hannah. He/she asked questions to white deponents on behalf of Isaac.

1831-015: Andrew Boyd & Wife vs. Thomas Jackson: includes James Patton's will (ancestor of James Patton Preston an early VA governor and William Ballard Preston a Confederate Senator as well as the namesake for the Methodist school that became Virginia Tech) and 1747 land grant.

1831-019: William Weaver vs. Thomas Mayberry: The dissolution of the partnership of Weaver and Mayberry that owned the iron furnaces Buffalo Forge and Etna Furnace. The main issue in the case is the ownership of eleven slaves, some of whom were valuable iron workers.

1832-042: Peter Bolinger vs. George Kaylor etc.: Bolinger, the father of a "seduced" woman, sued the man who supposedly debauched his daughter – the father paid jail fees for 12 months because the accused man refused to post bail.

1833-026: Admr of Harriet Parks vs. Exr. of William A Washington, etc.: Includes information regarding General George Washington's estate settlement.

1833-028: Washington Chiles vs. Mary Chiles: Very early divorce case – filed one year after Va. Assembly allowed superior circuit courts of chancery to hear and decide certain types of divorce cases. The case was transferred to Albemarle Co. for a decision.



1833-036: Margaret Nesbitt etc. vs. James Elliott etc.: Includes a deed signed by Patrick Henry.

1834-041

Reps. of Joseph Borden vs... John Bowyer &c

Levi Branson vs... Robert Harvey & wife &c

Robert Harvey & wife vs... Levi Branson &c

Benjamin Peck vs... Robert Harvey &c

Heirs of John McDowell vs... Heirs of Benjamin Borden

Stephen Trigg vs... Robert Harvey &c

John Paul &c vs... Benjamin Borden &c

William McKenny vs... Stephen Trigg &c

James Houston &c vs... Heirs of Benjamin Borden

John Calbreath &c vs... Levi Borden &c

These ten cases concern a land grant of almost 100,000 acres, between Lexington and Staunton, given to Benjamin Borden after the 1705 law, which forbade purchase of more than 4000 acres. Borden, a land speculator, was one of the few entities allowed to purchase such a large acreage. The land was purchased at some point in the 1730s. Included in the collection are 67 plats.

1839-007: John N. Hunter vs. John Brooks: Case involves the sale of a Negro woman named Matilda 22 years old (along with her 2 year old child) was considered to be "defective" because she was given to having "fits" or "hysterical incidents".

1840-023: William Cochran vs. James Donathan: Case involves a free colored man (Cochran) suing James Donathan over a plot of land he purchased and for the title deed to the land. Donathan apparently sold the same land to an Abraham Smith; the case involves Cochran efforts to get the deed.

1842-042: Multiple suits involving Cyrus Hyde, Thomas Caskey, and John Caskey: The suit includes a transcript of a letter to the editor of a local newspaper written perhaps by David Ruffin. He wanted permission to write a column in the newspaper about the history of Augusta County and its people. Ruffin wrote that this idea came to him after he examined "the records of our courts."

1844-042: Daniel Webster vs. Exrs. of David Hanger etc.: Case of Daniel



Webster (a former slave but a “freeman of color”). Slave in 1834 in the Commonwealth owned by David Hanger, requesting \$300 Hanger had left him in his will. Webster purchased a slave girl from L. I. Stevenson named Eliza with permission of his master Hanger. “Your orator is well aware the said girl became the property of his master, but his master had always permitted your orator to retain and treat said girl as his own property, ever since her purchase by your orator of Stevenson” Hanger sold Webster to John N.C. Stockton for \$550 with the agreement that Stockton purchase Eliza as well. Also Webster could earn his freedom from Stockton after working for him for a certain period of time. Webster agreed to the transaction on the condition that he would receive his freedom. Stockton purchased Webster and moved to Florida. Stockton died before emancipating Webster. Before his death, Stockton refused to give Webster evidence of his freedom until they returned to VA. Stockton’s heirs refuse to grant Webster his freedom. Webster won his freedom in Albemarle County court in 1840. Copy of suit used as exhibit. Hanger’s exrs. refuse to give Webster the \$300 claiming Webster was a slave at the time of Hanger’s death in 1837. Webster argues that although he was legally free in 1840 he was in fact free in 1835 or 1836 based on the agreement between Hanger and Stockton; therefore, he should receive the \$300. The defendants claimed that the reason Hanger sold Webster was to Stockton was because Webster attempted to poison Hanger in an effort to gain his freedom sooner. Hanger no longer concerned if Webster ever gained his freedom. Webster lost the case.

1845-015: Admr. of Andrew Moore vs. Reps. of John Stuart, etc.: Reference to Louisiana Purchase in suit and its negative impact on property values in the western mountains.

1846-043: Sampson Pelter vs. William A. Turk: Involves sale of five slaves by Turk who does not sale all five but withholds Kennedy the Negro slave for himself. Breach of contract case.

1847-003: John Bridget~ vs. Exrs of Susan Wayt: Freedom suit. Slave Manumission as recorded in a will by Susan Wayt. Freeing of John Bridget, Jeff, Martha, Ann . The will states that Ms. Wayt wanted her “servants” freed, given the sum of 800.00 and should be “permitted to reside in



Beekley to agree & come forward upon that score, or to make a Division. And your Orator avers that If he could obtained such a Division: where required he could have disposed of the land to an advantage, but now the opening of Land Offices on the west side of Ohio, prevents farther sales of Lands amongst the mountains, and the late purchase of Louisiana has totally extinguished every hope that any sales of mountain lands will be made for years or ages to come; so that such a division now, were the gentlemen inclined to make it, would in no wise compensate your Orator for his trouble, expences and many injuries received, for besides the one hundred and ten thousand two hundred sixty six and one half acres with which your Orator furnished the said Moore and Beekley at his own expence, he did also locate fifty nine Thousand seven hundred and seventy one and one half acres of Warrants for the said Defendants to complete their quantity of One hundred and Seventy Thousand and thirty eight acres, of which they are now possessed, and which by their own showing, was worth more than Seventeen thousand pounds. And your Orator avers that, If he had secured the title in his own name

1845-015: Admr. of Andrew Moore vs. Reps. of John Stuart, etc.: Documents in this case refer to the Louisiana Purchase.



some other state of the Union. Pennsylvania or some other state of the union where such difficulty may not exist or to the Colony of Liberia”.

1849-023: Tapp Teter vs. Daniel Faber: Tap Teter a free man of color and Daniel Faber were business partners in a blacksmith business. Mr Teter believed he was being taken advantage of by Mr. Faber. Mr. Faber was cheating Mr. Teter out of proceeds for his portion of the work in the business.

1849-024: Archibald Trotter vs. John H. Bates: Personal property suit involving Archibald Trotter who purchases a workhorse from John H. Bates, “the mare promptly decides not to work” for Mr. Trotter the mare is described as wild and dangerous and will kick! This is why Trotter wanted his money back.

1851-037: Thomas Johnston vs. Sam~: Johnston sues Sam, a former slave to the Johnston family, for repayment for supporting Sam after he purchased his freedom.

1855-034: Heirs of William Broughton vs. James Holderby etc.
Charles Morgan etc. vs. John Savage
William Coleman etc. vs. Simon Morgan etc.
Heirs of John Williamson vs. David Spurlock etc.
William Coleman etc. vs. David Spurlock etc.

During the French and Indian War, George Washington led a regiment of Virginia soldiers in the Battle of the Great Meadows, also known as the Battle of Fort Necessity, which would become Washington’s only military defeat. After the battle, the soldiers were given a land grant that would become known as the Savage Grant in 1772 when Virginia governor John Savage made the grant legal. As commanding officer, Washington was in charge of surveying the land and directing the portions to which claimants were entitled. A letter written by Washington in 1772, not found in the suit, details Washington’s involvement and his desire to be finished with the situation. In 1772, the interested parties were supposed to meet to divide and distribute the land. Very few of the recipients actually inhabited the land. They either sold the land to third parties or the land was taken away due to lack of improvements. The suits involve heirs who say their ancestors never received the land to which they were entitled. There are no decrees included in the case.



1857-068: Admr. of Joseph Jamison vs. Maria L. Jamison (alias Mariah L. Jamison) etc.: After the death of her husband, Maria Jamison struggles to provide income for her family. The suit is a request to sell property so that the dower may be restored to Maria and so that she can move the family closer to town to make her sewing business more profitable. The case provides an interesting account of a woman struggling to manage an estate/farm and to support her family.

1857-082: Recv(s) of Nicholas C. Kinney etc. vs. Admr. of Jeremiah Aude etc.: Aude emigrated to the U.S. from Great Britain and became a U.S. citizen. He owned a substantial amount of real and personal estate in Augusta County. Aude died without a will. He had no wife or children. All his relatives lived in Great Britain. They made claims to his property in U.S. Problems – a) It was unlawful in the U.S. for aliens to inherit property unless they declared to be citizens of the U.S. They all stated they would become U.S. citizens. b) To receive their portion of Aude's estate, they had to prove they were kin to Aude. Exhibits filed in the suit include numerous certificates of burials, marriages, and baptisms copied from church registers in England going back to the 1700's. Also included is a genealogical chart illustrating their relationship to Aude.

1858-042: Alexander S. Hall vs. James F. Patterson etc.: references to a suit vs. US Government related to US Revolutionary War service of Henry W. Nicholson, cornet of cavalry in VA Line.

1859-006: Patrick McAlear vs. Admr of Charles McAlear etc.: Contains naturalization papers of Michael McAleer of Ireland, 1843 Rockbridge Co.

1860-016: James W. Bishop etc. vs. Admr. of Elizabeth P. Via and Exr. of Elizabeth P. Via vs. James W. Bishop etc.: Heirs sued to overturn will of Via who freed all of her slaves and left \$4000 to send them to a free state. Will was upheld. Receipts and extensive account documenting executor's trip to Columbus, Ohio in 1861 with freed slaves including purchase for them of a farm and farm and household goods. Also includes names, ages, and physical description of each slave.

1860-041: Daniel McCune (alias Daniel Boyer) etc vs. William Craig



etc: Freed slaves of Samuel McCune were left money from sale of his goods and property in 1835 and moved to Ohio. Agent to infants William Craig being sued by now-adult infants Daniel and Gilbert McCune, former slaves, for not doing his job properly. Big question of the suit seems to be question of court jurisdiction to decide the case. Suit dismissed due to lack of activity.

1863-027: Exr. Of Chapman J. Stuart vs. Mary J. Stuart (alias Mary Jane Clark):

Case pertains to the disbursements of the estates of Chapman Stuart and his father Alexander Stuart. Mary Stuart was the infant daughter of Chapman who was seeking more funds as she became of an age to go about in society. There is a great amount of documentation on the expenses and purchases of a young woman during the period, which includes biannual account ledgers of her purchases for the years 1860 to 1862. The executor Archibald H.H. Stuart explains why there is not as much money in the estate as her father had originally thought when he composed the will, and he includes receipts showing how the estate is being funded. Included in the case are receipts signed by JEB Stuart for funds that were allotted for his education at West Point. There is also information on slave property with several slaves mentioned by name.

1867-021: Pamela Jones vs. Admr. of Armestead Jones: Pamela, a free woman of color, sues her brother's widow, whom she accuses of being of unsound mind, for control of his estate. Mention is made of their mother Mary Jones who was once a slave.

1867-054: Rebecca Ann Vickers vs. George Vickers: Rebecca Ann Vickers, freeborn, married her first husband George Washington, a slave who went over to fight with the Union and was later presumed dead. Subsequently Rebecca Ann married George Vickers under the agreement that she would return to her first husband if he should prove to be still alive. After having children with her second husband, Rebecca Ann did return to her first husband when he reappeared in Augusta Co.

1868-010: George Coiner vs. Dinah Coiner and 1868-015: Diana Kiner vs. George Kiner: George, a freeman, sued for divorce on grounds that he was forced into marriage with Dinah Bumgardner. George's bill includes



a story of being apprehended by two military guards, one black and one white, and forced to Staunton. There he was given the choice of marrying said Dinah or being taken to Richmond as a prisoner. After being reassured by an officer that he could leave after the ceremony, George entered into the ceremony at bayonet point. There is an implication in the bill that Dinah's employer Strouse was involved in the case, and he in fact provided a deposition in her favor. Dinah claims that George promised to marry her and then had "carnal knowledge" of her. After the ceremony, George claims that he never cohabitated with the defendant.

1869-005: Thomas Bell vs. Mary Bell: Includes interesting material on what it is like to be married while a slave, including the discussion of the deaths of two of their children while the third was sold to another plantation. Thomas discusses his former owner Blackwood who he continued to be employed by after the war. Thomas also briefly worked with the Freedmen's Bureau; although, no real information is provided.

1870-002: Jonathan Landes vs. Robert A. Curry & wife: Landes, who describes himself as being of "advanced age," was still considered to be of military age and was afraid of conscription into the Confederate army. Landes listed being allegiant to the United States as one of the reasons that he hired sixteen-year-old George H. Curry to be his substitute. Landes agreed to a series of payments amounting to \$850 to be paid through the year 1866 to George Curry or his mother. George Curry died during the war and his parents took up a suit on his behalf and sued Landes successfully for the money owed to them according to the contract. Landes appeals that ruling in this chancery suit by claiming that the contract was illegal because it served to further the rebellious cause of the confederacy. The judge disagreed and claimed that the contract was a personal one and not subject to the outcome of the war.

1870-026: Mary Frances Kinney vs. William H. Tams etc.: Case concerns a marriage settlement for Mary in which most of her property remained in her control; although the actual control of the money and property was maintained by her uncle. Mary is suing because her uncle invested most of her money in Confederate bonds and stocks without her knowledge. Case includes an interesting deposition of Mary in which is discussed the relationship of women and business.



1870-067: Jordan & Peyton vs. Mrs. Sally G. Dyer and Mrs. Sally G. Dyer vs. Jordan & Peyton: Dyer hired out three slaves. Slave Fanny was sent to a second hire, of which Mrs. Dyer claimed no knowledge or consent. Her new owner Mason was given "occasion to correct her ... for some fault," and the slave Fanny ran off back to her home with Dyer. Dyer refused to return Fanny to Mason who she claimed "had given her a very severe whipping for some alleged fault." Dyer said that Fanny returned to her after being "cruelly beaten" and "lodged in jail."

1884-084: John M. Brown & wife vs. Philip O. Palmer etc. and Admr. of Philip O. Palmer etc vs. Foutz & wife: John M. Brown and his wife Clara C. Brown nee Lamb sue Philip Palmer who was her guardian and controller of her father's estate. Brown alleges that Palmer misappropriated the funds and did not care for Clara properly. Several depositions in the case discuss Clara's role in the family and work done by women. Also include are eight fabric swatches entered as an exhibit for the deposition of Catharine Ott. Ott states that they are fabric samples from eight Sunday dresses owned by Clara Lamb.

1876-047: Sandy Washington vs. Samuel Lushbaugh & wife: Sandy Washington (colored—mulatto) suing Lushbaugh regarding his sister Henrietta Washington's last will, dated 1875, on grounds of her "weak mind."

1876-058: John J. Rusmisl etc. vs. Exr. of Christian Rusmisl etc.: Solomon Staubus & wife vs. Exr. of Christian Rusmisl etc.: John J. Rusmisl served in the 25th VA Infantry (Heck's Regiment); POW at Ft. Delaware (per bill); includes (as an exhibit) letter from John J. Rusmisl to his brother (written from battlefield—Orange County, VA, 1 April 1864); mentions that Grant has taken over Yankee Forces. Image# 252-253

1876-072: Lewis Bumgardner, etc. vs. City of Staunton, etc: L. Bumgardner & Co. was a manufacturer of and wholesale dealers in liquors. The suit deals with recently-enacted taxes and assessment thereof. Plaintiffs state that the City of Staunton has no right to impose taxes on them (since the company only sells liquor they have produced). Judge sided with the City of Staunton (defendants).



1876-115: Archibald J. Porter etc. vs. Archibald D. Trotter etc. and Archibald J. Porter etc. vs. David S. Young etc.: Land dispute involving Methodist Episcopal Church of Staunton and Methodist Episcopal Church South; dispute covers sale of land containing church building. One of the defendants is Mary J. Baldwin (for whom Mary Baldwin College, formerly Augusta Female Seminary, is named).

1876-121: Sandy Washington vs. Samuel Lushbaugh & wife: Second attempt by Sandy Washington (colored) in estate litigation regarding his (and deceased sisters') inheritance from William Carrol (who left his estate to his three freed slaves). Washington's sister Henrietta (of unsound mind) left her portion of the estate to Samuel Lushbaugh's wife. Relates to chancery cause 1876-047.

1877-029: John Pelter etc. vs. Exr. of Sampson Pelter etc.: Plaintiffs are former slaves (who have taken Pelter's name); dispute over land bequeathed to the plaintiffs. Argument includes fact that Sampson Pelter died after Civil War was over, and plaintiffs had been freed.

1877-071: Erasmus Stribling Crawford etc. vs. Exx. of James Crawford etc. and Margaret A. Crawford vs. Admr. of Nicholas K. Trout etc.: Causes mention a slave named Matilda, owned by the late James Crawford, who was hired out to the Western State Asylum. Includes a copy of Matilda's bill of sale between and James Crawford, 5 December 1825.

1878-118: William Fisher vs. Mary McGee: Land/debt case involving mulatto female landowner (who failed to pay part of the agreed amount for parcel of land). Bill filed 1869—listed as head of household in 1870 census.

1879-094: Heirs of Silas Henton vs. Heirs of Silas Henton; Admr. of Rachael Adeline Reamer, etc. vs. Admr. of William S. Henton; Admr. of Rachael Adeline Reamer, etc. vs. David B. Henton, etc.; Lewis M. McClung & wife etc. vs. David B. Henton etc.: includes depositions of former slaves, who had been owned by the Henton and Reamer families. Also includes report of sale of Silas Henton's slaves.



1878-078: M. B. Smart vs. William C Eskridge etc.: Case involves the dissolution of a partnership formed in order to buy and sell horses. Partnership failed after the purchase of only one horse, a stallion named Hampton.

1879-042: Heirs of Jacob Dull vs. Admr. of Jacob Dull etc.; John Pery vs. Admr. of Jacob Dull etc.; John B. Hanger vs. Admr. of Jacob Dull etc.: Case includes a genealogical chart of the heirs of Jacob Dull (who died unmarried with no living children).

1880-035: John M. Ryan etc. vs. John F. Hix etc.: Case includes personal correspondence between John Hix (Ironton, OH) and Annie E. Ryan (Staunton, VA) (Cousins—Hix found her by writing to the superintendent of the lunatic asylum). Hix had lost all contact with his family (even though his sister lived in Huntington, WV, about 20 miles away). Much of the content involves the estate of Aunt Sallie (or Sally) Ryan and distribution of funds from the sale of her property.

1880-119: Wesleyan Female Institute vs. John H. Plunkett etc.: Case includes two architectural drawings, showing a building addition that Plunkett and others were charged with building.

1881-077: Heirs of Caroline Kinney vs. James Kinney: Bill states that Caroline Kinney was “a free woman of color, before the general emancipation of slave...”

1882-056: Cred. Of Elias Pirkey vs. Elias Pirkey, etc.: Case includes a very large broadside advertising the sale of the land surrounding the “Cave of the Fountains.”

1887-053: Addison W. Caldwell vs. Cora T. Caldwell (alias Josie Talbott): Addison Caldwell filed for divorce from his wife, who at the time was living the life of a prostitute in Lexington, KY. Includes deposition of a proprietress of one of the houses of ill fame where the wife lived and worked.

1887-069: William Spears vs. Martha Spears: Plaintiff and defendant were former slaves, whose marriage was validated by the Act of the [General] Assembly of the 27th of February 1866. Defendant packed all the plaintiff’s belongings into a hired coach while he was at work and deserted him and their children.



1887-072: Ada I. Simmons vs. William M Simmons: Plaintiff and defendant were married after the plaintiff (then about 5 months pregnant) served the defendant a warrant for "seduction under promise of marriage." The couple were married at the plaintiff's father's house, and the defendant deserted her later that night.

1889-026: Richard Watkins etc. vs. Laflin & Rand Powder Co. etc.: Plaintiffs filed for injunction against the Laflin & Rand Powder Co., which was trying to build a powder magazine near their houses (three others were in existence, in some cases closer than the one proposed). Laflin & Rand was the number 2 producer of explosive powder, behind the DuPont Company, which later acquired it. Both were part of the "powder trust," broken up by Theo. Roosevelt in the early 20th Century. Includes a letter from the Repauno Chemical Company (manufacturer of Atlas powder) explaining how safe (as compared to black powder) its product is.

1889-042: Robert Knightly vs. City of Staunton: The City of Staunton purchased land upstream from the plaintiff and diverted the streams that flowed through both (both pieces of property were purchased from the same family). The plaintiff claimed that this destroyed the value of his property because there was not enough water to power mills and other things. After he filed suit, the city condemned the section of his property through which the stream ran.

1893-015: Willie Jane Beaty vs. B.F. Cochran, etc. (alias Frank Cochran): Case filed for payment of a \$200 bond issued to the plaintiff by the defendant and Adam McChesney (his half brother). The bond (and another \$300 one, issued to plaintiff's aunt) was issued in order to avoid prosecution of McChesney for assault with intention of committing rape (first stated that Willie J Beatty was the victim, and later revealed to be Mary E. Carter, the aunt).

1893-030: James A. Fishburne, Trst vs J.M. Quarles, etc: Case includes 5 large plats of Basic City, VA, now part of Waynesboro.

1893-037: Green Valley United Brethren Church (Petition): Case includes proceedings from the meetings of three congregations relating to



their membership in the United Brethren Church. No court action was necessary, and there is no defendant.

1893-078: Annie Davis vs. William Davis: Divorce case in which the defendant left his wife after about 4 years of marriage for her mother (the husband and mother had one child after that).

1895-023: Hugh F. Lyle etc vs. Mervin E. Kyle: The defendant built a slaughterhouse and stockyard very near plaintiffs' house (bill gives exact distances), polluting a stream and causing insufferable smells and noises.

1895-048: Ann Blackburn vs. Exr. of Samuel Blackburn etc.: Case involves the estate of General Samuel Blackburn, and Revolutionary War general. He was the son in law of General George Mathews, also a Revolutionary War veteran and later governor of Georgia (resigned after the Yazoo Land Fraud).

1900-054: Annie B. Back By, etc. vs. John B. Back: Marriage license was obtained in the bride's absence (per bill)—groom claimed that she was 20 years old, when she was in fact 13. She had run away from her adopted father's house, where the couple returned a few days after the marriage. The defendant abandoned the plaintiff after about two months of marriage.

1902-004: Frank H. Bailey vs. Nannie C. Bailey: Divorce case that includes transcriptions of two letters from the plaintiff to the defendant explaining why he wanted a divorce (and why he had abandoned her).

1903-091: J.H. Headen etc. vs. County School Board of Augusta County: Plaintiffs brought suit to stop the county school board from closing and selling two public schools. Much of the argument involves the fact that the students would have to travel over a busy bridge (or railroad bridge) to get to their new school.

1905-003: Mary Bell Lindsay vs. Samuel Lindsay: Divorce case includes a series of letters sent between the plaintiff and defendant.

Your Receipt is most ⁽⁷⁾ingenuously charged with
 being a disturbance of the public peace, — if a
 strong attachment and an ardent admiration
 of the great truths on which our free institutions
 are based — that all men are created equal,
 and that they are endowed by their Creator
 with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and
 the pursuit ^{of happiness} — is sedition — is there a disturbance
 of the public peace; if a fanatic preaching of
 those religious, moral and righteous doctrines
 which sear the heart of man, restrain his pas-
 sions, and enable his nature can affect the
 harmony of society — is there indeed a disturbance
 of the public peace; but as no man can say that
 these things are wrong, your Receipt must conclude
 that this public ^{agitation} can only have an ideal exis-
 tence in the little mind of its legitimate father
 Your Receipt further answers that the ages of the
 children are as follows, to wit, William George
 Wells about fifteen years the 20th day of Feb'y 1820,
 Lebecca Wells about thirteen years ^{& six months} the 20th day
 of Feb'y 1820. & Harry Sampson about twelve
 — on the 20th of Feb'y 1820 — ~~that the~~

This document is found in the Cravens case, detailed in the fol-
 lowing pages.



Augusta County Chancery Cause 1821-023, John Morris vs. William Cravens, etc. (By Local Records Archivist Catherine G. O'Brien)

This suit provides unusual insight into the tensions between people who defended slaveholding and people who opposed it during the early national period, a period of transition in attitudes toward slaveholding in the upper South. Between 1800 and 1830, slaveholding became more entrenched in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Most of the immigrants who settled the Valley were less hospitable to slavery and slave culture than people living in the tidewater and piedmont regions of the state, but the rich soil in the Valley attracted an increasing number of slaveholders in the early nineteenth century. Between 1800 and 1830, the slave population in the Valley grew 92 percent, while the white population grew at a rate of just 26.8 percent. Throughout the slaveholding regions of the South, antislavery sentiment among Baptist and Methodist preachers also dwindled during these years, as these growing denominations made accommodations with the dominant slaveholding culture. During this period, people who opposed slavery most, including many Quakers and Methodists, left Virginia and settled in the free territories of the Midwest.¹

William Cravens was among those whose opposition to slavery, fueled by religious convictions and civic ideals, led him to leave Virginia and head west in the early nineteenth century. He settled part of his family to Indiana in 1820, and joined them in 1821. Cravens was born in 1766 in Rockingham County. In 1794, he married Jane Harrison and united with the Methodist Church. He and his brother were among those named as trustees for a school established in Rockingham by Methodist bishop Francis Asbury during this period. Cravens was licensed to preach by Bishop Francis Asbury in 1800 and became an ordained deacon the same year. When he joined the Methodists, he emancipated his slaves and even traveled to Georgia to re-purchase and free slaves he had sold previously.²

Cravens preached frequently against slavery and told slaveholders unequivocally that slaveholding was not compatible with either Christianity or American political ideals. Slavery, he said, was "contrary to the golden rule, contrary to God's Word, and in opposition to the Declaration of Independence." A biography of Cravens, published in 1869, recounts numerous anecdotes attesting to Craven's reputation as a fearless and uncompromising opponent of slavery and drinking, first as a traveling preacher in Virginia, and beginning in 1821 as a member of



the traveling connection in the Missouri Conference riding circuits in present-day Tennessee, Missouri, Indiana and Illinois. In 1822, he organized the Indianapolis circuit.³

Cravens' reputation as a zealous opponent of slaveholding is corroborated by the portrait of him that emerges from a chancery cause decided in the Augusta County Court in 1821 (John Morris vs. William Cravens, etc., 1821-023). In the lawsuit, John Morris sues Craven in order to collect a debt, but he seems to be motivated by rage against Cravens for his outspoken opposition to slavery as much as his desire to recover his money. Morris is seeking to collect a debt of about \$45 from Sampson (surname unknown) who had been liberated by Cravens (Craven bought Sampson, then Sampson repaid the price of his purchase by working for him). After freeing Sampson, Cravens bought Sampson's wife and youngest child and took them with him to Indiana, where he had bought land and settled some members of his family.

To secure Sampson's debt to him, Morris had the sheriff seize Fanny, Sampson's twelve-year-old daughter, whom Sampson had purchased in order to free her from slavery. Before Morris could collect the debt, Fanny was kidnapped and removed from Virginia, allegedly by William Cravens' nephew. In his chancery suit, Morris seeks the return of Fanny as security for Sampson's debt. He accuses Cravens and Sampson of conspiring to remove Fanny from the state and defraud him of his property.

In the bill of complaint, Morris portrays Cravens as a hypocrite who is claiming the moral high ground as a preacher and opponent of slavery while owning slaves himself, profiting from the labor of others, and stealing. Cravens, he charges, "has almost become a disturber of the public peace, by his numerous invectives against slavery, [and] would be indignant it is presumed, at any declaration, which would charge him (no matter whether with a good or bad motive) of being but for a moment a slave holder." He accuses Cravens of contracting with Sampson to deliver Sampson and his children to freedom and a farm in the free state of Illinois, in return for their labor and the labor of their children until grown. "This was the devious path which the defendant Cravens pursued, hoping to profit by the labour of the s[ai]d children (who are even now capable of earning wages), reaping the benefits of slavery and yet not a slave holder, claiming to be entitled to the applause of emancipating, without being owner, and setting free at the cost of other people."



In his answer, Cravens begins by denying the alleged fraud and defending his dealings with Sampson and his family. He purchased Sampson and freed him; then, at Sampson's request, purchased Sampson's wife and child and intended to have them work for him to repay the cost of their purchase, with interest. He purchased them, he said, not for the benefit of Sampson or himself "but for the benefit of her and her children." Cravens explained that he had promised Sampson that if he ever moved to a free state, he would arrange to take Sampson and his family with him. When he bought a farm in Indiana and moved some members of his family there in 1820, he took Sampson's wife and child with him. Morris, he argued, had no right to demand the sheriff seize Fanny as security for Sampson's debt because Sampson had enough assets, including "grain in the ground" and Cravens' bond to him for a 160-acre farm in Indiana, to pay the debt.

Defending himself against having been "most ungenerously charged with being a Disturber of the public peace," Cravens draws on the words of the Declaration of Independence and the principles of religion and morality. "If a strong attachment and indeed admiration of the great truths on which our free institutions are based," he argues, "'that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with the unalienable right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,' is seditious, he is then a disturber of the public peace." Likewise, Cravens continues, if a "fearless preaching of those religious, moral, and righteous doctrines which soften the heart of man, restrain his passions, and enable his nature, can affect the harmony of society, hee is then indeed a disturber of the public peace."

In the decree issued in 1821, the judge set aside the impending sale of the child Fanny, and awarded court costs to Cravens. Cravens settled with his family on a farm near present-day Indianapolis, Indiana. He is remembered as a pioneer of Methodism in Indiana, famous for his opposition to slavery, drinking, and the use of musical instruments in religious worship services. Once settled in a free state, he did not give up the fight against slavery, but preached against the hypocrisy of people who had sold their slaves, then built fine houses with the profits and lived in luxury in a free state. These people, he charged, were committing a sin worse than those who continued to live with slaves in the South. He also condemned families who had hired out the labor of their slaves in the South, and were using the money to live in Indiana. Cravens died at his home in Worthington County, Indiana, October 10, 1826.⁴



Other members of the Cravens family also left the South and then continued to advocate against slavery. James Harrison Cravens, William Cravens' nephew, left Harrisonburg and moved to Franklin, Pennsylvania, in 1829, then settled in Madison, Indiana, in 1829. James Cravens was elected to the Illinois state senate in 1839, and served in the U.S. Congress from 1841 to 1843. He broke with the Indiana Whig party in 1846 over the issue of slavery and joined the Free Soil party. In 1848, James Cravens was appointed a vice-president of the 1848 Free Soil Convention at Buffalo, New York. In 1849, he ran for Governor of Indiana as a Free Soil party candidate, and was the Republican candidate for Attorney General in 1849. James Cravens was known as a skilled debater and opponent of the extension of slavery, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act requiring citizens to return escaping slaves to their owners, and Article 13 of the 1851 Constitution of Indiana prohibiting blacks from moving into Indiana.⁵

John Morris continued to litigate, unsuccessfully, to prevent the emancipation of people whose emancipators owed him money. The Augusta County Chancery Cause 1830-016, John Morris vs. Administrators of John Harrison, he tries to override the decision of the Rockingham County Court in favor of Isaac Harrison, who had successfully sued for his freedom against the administrators of the Harrison estate. Morris appealed the judgment in the Augusta County chancery court, but lost. The court decided that the administrators of the estate had access to enough land to satisfy creditors without re-enslaving Isaac.

Endnotes

¹Alison Goodyear Freehling, *Drift toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 32-34. Despite this rapid growth in slaveholding, slavery was not nearly as predominant as the Valley as it was in other parts of the state; in 1830, slaves were only 19.9 percent of total population in the Valley, compared to 51.1 percent of piedmont and 48.6 percent of Tidewater. There were some elite families in the Valley by 1830, but the predominant culture remained more democratic and progressive than it was in the Tidewater and Piedmont regions.

²The Rev. J.B. Wakeley, *The Bold Frontier Preacher. A Portraiture of Rev. William Cravens, of Virginia*. (Cincinnati: Hithcock & Walden, 1869), 14-15. Cravens' first cousin was Peachy Harrison, delegate representing Rockingham County in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830.

³*Ibid.*, 18-21, 42-43; 100.

⁴*Ibid.*, 21.

⁵James H. Cravens is described as "one of the ablest of the men who changed public sentiment in Indiana on the slavery question." The source for this quotation is the Wikipedia article on James Harrison Cravens, which cites Woollen, "The Story of James Harrison Cravens (Ripley County)," 274, 279. This source also states that Cravens was a lawyer and a farmer and that he emancipated his slaves, which were a third of his estate.



Book Reviews

[Editor's Note: The following section consists of reviews of recent books on regional and Virginia history as well as several that pertain to the history of the South. Unless otherwise noted, these reviews are by AHB Book Review Editor and Associate Editor Daniel A. Métraux, Professor of Asian Studies at Mary Baldwin College. Please send any reviews or questions about reviews to the AHB's Book Review Editor, Daniel Métraux at dmetraux@mbc.edu or Dept. of Asian Studies, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, VA 24401. The deadline for all reviews is October 1, 2012.]

Regional and Virginia History

Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz, Eds. *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010. 309 pp.

The Great Valley Road of Virginia has played a critical role in the development of the United States. For many centuries the major pathway for Native Americans moving through the area, by the eighteenth century it had become perhaps the most important route for Anglo-American migration from coastal regions to the interior. Over time the road became a critical segment of a much longer road that began in eastern Pennsylvania, headed southwest through the Shenandoah Valley to western North or South Carolina and upcountry Georgia. After the French and Indian War the road was the key passage linking the eastern states through the Cumberland Gap to the frontier regions of Tennessee, Kentucky, southern Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and points further west such as Texas. Many famous Americans such as Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay traveled on the road when moving back and forth between Tennessee, Kentucky and Washington, D.C. Today the road's modern incarnation, Interstate 81, continues to be an important link between east and west, north and south.

Warren R. Hofstra, Stewart Bell Professor of History at Shenandoah University, and Karl Raitz, Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor at the University of Kentucky, have edited a fascinating study of the Great Valley Road from its early history as an Indian path to its most recent incarnation as a very crowded superhighway. There are essays by the editors as well as six other scholars: Michael N. McConnell, Gabrielle M. Lanier, Geraldine Wojno Kiefer, James K. Bryant III, Kenneth W. Keller, and Ann E. McCleary.



What makes this book so important is that is far more than a story about a road – rather, it is the history of this entire region: Who came and why; what kinds of houses and towns they built; what they grew and how they transported goods to and from the Valley to a global market. As Anne E. McCleary notes:

[At] the same time that the turnpike networked the Valley to a global economy and boosted trade and industry, it also helped knit together a distinctive Valley culture. The turnpike towns provided the physical space where national and transnational ideas interfaced with local needs, values and traditions to create a regional identity that defined the residents: progressive yet conservative, willing to adopt some new ways of thinking while holding on to deep-seated, often ethnic or religious values... By facilitating communication within the Valley, the turnpike promoted a common architectural and cultural aesthetic still seen today in these towns. The turnpike towns followed similar patterns of architectural development while still evolving their own distinctive character. (193)

Each chapter of the book traces the development of both the road and the Valley as a whole from colonial days to the present. Perhaps the greatest changes came in the early years of the Republic between the Revolution and the Civil War. Kenneth Keller in his fascinating chapter, “The Best Thoroughfare in the South” traces the history the road from its early rough years as a wagon path to its transition to a major turnpike at the onset of the Civil War:

The evolution of a wagon road into a great artery to distant cities was part of a sweeping change that took place between the American Revolution and the Civil War, a transformation that launched the transition to modern capitalism. This change brought with it not only access to distant customers, new forms of financial organization, technological innovation, new settlements, new uses of land, labor and capital, and entrepreneurship, but also significant shifts in human behavior, as people paid less heed to traditional moral and religious restraints, family ties, customs, personal relationships and feelings, and more attention to prices and markets. Road building was an integral part of this intensified search for profit. Through the nineteenth century, as road promoters attempted to satisfy new demands of this shift to a freer capitalism, the state’s road development enterprise brought the era of building turnpikes, or toll roads, and the most advanced of these highways was the Valley Turnpike. (153)

Interestingly enough, the Valley Road, now Route 11, had toll booths every few miles through the dawn of the automobile era a century ago when Harry F. Byrd in his capacity as Valley Turnpike Company and



later as a major political leader of the state realized that private entities could not afford to make all the necessary improvements for automobiles. He led the successful campaign to convert the Valley Turnpike into a free, public, state-maintained road.

The book itself is a collector's item. There are numerous illustrations that beautifully document the road and its surroundings from the distant past to the present. Each chapter is meticulously researched. The writing styles of the authors differ greatly with some very readable chapters (Keller and McCleary) to the dry and hard to follow. The only chapter that was a bitter disappointment to this reader was the Kiefer and Bryant piece on the Civil War, which is little more than a gallery of pictures with no real analysis of the road's critical role during the war. Pretty pictures, but no substance. All in all, *The Great Valley Road of Virginia* belongs in every local historian's collection.

Edward L. Ayers and Carolyn R. Martin, Eds, *America on the Eve of the Civil War*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010. 147 pp.

Today as we observe the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, there is a renewed debate over the causes of the conflict. Contemporary historians have the benefit of hindsight, but there is still no definitive consensus as to why the United States went to war against itself. Noted Civil War historian Edward L. Ayers, now president of the University of Richmond, has adopted a very different approach to the study of this era.

He proposes that we look at the mindset of Americans and the political climate of the nation in the period just before the secession process began. Ayers purposefully chose the year 1859 as a place to start and in 2009 convened a conference in Richmond in cooperation with the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission where he invited sixteen prominent public historians and scholars. The conference consisted of a dialogue between small groups of the participants on such topics as the general mood of the nation in 1859, the future of Virginia and the South, making Sense of John Brown's Raid, and predictions for the election of 1860. The book *America on the Eve of the Civil War* is a carefully edited transcription of the conference.

Americans in 1859 were enjoying a return to prosperity after the economic recession of 1857. The South produced over eighty percent of the world's cotton and was prospering because of heightened demand from the North and foreign markets such as Great Britain. The demand



for cotton as well as wheat and newer strains of tobacco from Virginia strengthened the need for slavery. The domestic slave trade at such centers as Richmond was booming and the price for healthy young slaves was skyrocketing.

There were strains, however. The North was growing at a far faster rate than the South as most immigrants from Europe chose to settle in the North where their value as free laborers would be much higher. Greater population growth meant more seats in the House of Representatives for the North and the admission of more non-slave states greatly enhanced the power of the North in the Senate. The Fugitive Slave Law and the refusal of many in the North to enforce the law—and thus bar the return of very valuable slave property to their owners—enraged many in both the North and South for very different reasons.

There was a growing political crisis as well. On paper the South looked quite powerful in the national arena. President Buchanan was known for his sympathies for the South, the South-based Democratic Party controlled both houses of Congress, and there was a conservative majority on the Supreme Court. However, the Democratic Party, the only truly national political coalition, was splitting into northern and southern factions. The free soil Republican Party was clearly a sectional party based in the North, but the increased political clout of the North meant that a sectional party based there could win a national election if enough northern states banded together.

The Republican Party had fared fairly well in its inaugural 1856 presidential election, but its support base in the North was not that strong. However, the crisis in “Bleeding Kansas” coupled with the sensational caning of Massachusetts Senator Sumner by South Carolina Congressman Preston Brooks and John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry led to the growth of a militant wing of secessionist politicians in the South and a massive shift of northern voters to the Republicans. Most people in the North condemned the Harper’s Ferry raid in itself, but John Brown’s pronouncements on slavery won strong admiration across the North.

The 1860 election brought the national crisis to a head. The leading Democratic candidate, Senator Stephen Douglas, was an anathema in the South because he had worked with Republicans in 1858 to block Kansas’ admission as a slave state. Lincoln gained a reputation in the North as a moderate who would restore the consensus hope that sla-



very would gradually fade away. Historian Dan Crofts notes that “Abraham Lincoln says he simply wants to restore the policy of the Founding Fathers, who were not happy about the presence of slavery. In Lincoln’s eyes, the act of barring slavery north of the Ohio River, the Northwest Ordinance, provided a model that the country could come back to. By rescuing the country from the clutches of this proslavery Democratic Party, the free white men of the North would settle the situation, by means of an election, not by any violent means. Political legitimacy would be reestablished and the country would be put on more solid ground than the shaky times it had gone through in the 1850s.” (109)

Historian Clarence Walker crystallized the problem by focusing on slavery. “It seems to me what separates the North from the South is really the institution of slavery. Southerners spoke English as Northerners did, they worshipped in similar churches, they intermarried. There was trade and commerce between the two sections. If there is a distinction between the two sections, it is that one is based on free labor and the other is based on slavery. Slavery sits at the heart of the great divide.”(116) The conference participants agreed that another key was that the South was actually more prosperous than the North, but with its political future threatened by the suddenly expanding power of the free soil North, radicals in the South gambled that they could protect their slave-based economy through the creation of a new nation. They gambled with secession in 1860-61, but ultimately lost.

Virginia-based historians will be most interested in the chapter on the future of Virginia. We learn a great deal about the Virginia economy, the growing power of Richmond as a manufacturing, slave-trading and exporting center, and the fact that with a half-million slaves Virginia was the leading slave state in the United States and the profits from the slave trade were much greater than the major industries in town. It was common to see handbills advertising available slaves: “Good young woman and first child, \$1,300-1,450” or about \$25,000 to \$30,000 in today’s currency.

Because there are so many different discussions of very basic issues, the historians speak in very general terms for the benefit of the general reader. It is a great pleasure to hear the views of sixteen learned historians plus Ayers. One comes away with a better understanding of the issues that led to the Civil War and why certain groups of people acted the way they did. One also sees that some kind of clash was al-



most inevitable—two different yet very similar cultural nations living within a rapidly disintegrating nation-state. It's a very worthy and relatively fast read.

Mark A. Snell, *West Virginia and the Civil War: Mountaineers Are Always Free*. Charleston SC and London: The History Press, 2011. 255pp. \$21.99

People often say with some exaggeration that that the Civil War was a conflict where brother fought against brother and father against son, but when one speaks about West Virginia's role in the Civil War, there is often no exaggeration. As Civil War historian Mark A. Snell ably demonstrates in his new book, *West Virginia and the Civil War*, the western section of Virginia that became the state of West Virginia was the most divided part of the nation throughout the Civil War. As many as forty thousand of the new state's residents served as combatants in the conflict, about twenty thousand on each side. There is evidence of a fairly even divide in the loyalties of the residents of the region as well.

There had long been a divide between eastern and western Virginia. As one newspaper in western Virginia noted, "The causes of complaint on the part of the citizens of Western Virginia were unequal and unjust taxation; a studied partiality in legislation by the delegates of East Virginia, and an improper appropriation of public funds in the way of internal improvements." When the Virginia Secession Convention passed its Ordinance of Secession on 17 April, 1861, by an 88-55 vote, forty-eight of the dissenting votes came from the northern Shenandoah Valley and western mountain regions of Virginia. The referendum vote for secession, however, was far more divided. Voters in half of the forty-eight counties of the future state of West Virginia supported Virginia's leaving the Union.

Despite the great divide in western Virginia, however, leading politicians such as John Snyder Carlile of Clarksburg organized a convention in Wheeling in northwestern Virginia that brought forth a proposal for the formation of a new state, Western Virginia. When the proposal was put forward as a referendum in the counties affected by dismemberment from Virginia in late October, 1861, the vote was overwhelmingly in favor. Author Mark Snell notes, however:



The referendum...was not truly fair, because many of the counties of the proposed new state were staunchly loyal to the Confederacy and the old Commonwealth of Virginia with some, if not most, refusing to vote because of intimidation, fear of reprisal or outright rejection of the legality of the ordinance. On the other hand, voter intimidation also kept Unionists away from the polls in those counties with strong Confederate sympathies.

A second referendum in April 1862 on the creation of the new state and adoption of a constitution showed overwhelming support again, but the vote was skewed because no returns came in from pro-Confederate eastern and southern counties and the number of voters was quite low.

While Snell, director of the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War and professor of history at Shepard University in West Virginia, looks at the great divide among the residents of western Virginia over the question of statehood, he devotes far more attention to the soldiers and battles involving West Virginians throughout the war. We follow West Virginians on both sides as they slogged through a most bitter conflict that cost so many lives.

It is ironic that there were occasional lulls in the fighting when soldiers on both sides would fraternize with each other, exchanging such items as coffee and tobacco, but would start kicking each other in earnest once the fighting resumed hours later.

One poignant story related how one brother, "Wes" Culp joined the Confederate army while his brother William and a close friend of Wes, Jack Skelly, fought for the Union. Jack was badly wounded during a battle at Winchester just prior to Gettysburg. Wes found Jack who gave him a letter to give to his sweetheart, Virginia Wade, a resident of Gettysburg. Wes died at Gettysburg before he could deliver the note, but that mattered little because Wade became the victim of a stray bullet, the only civilian killed during the three days of fighting in the Pennsylvania battle.

Snell's book has very detailed accounts of every battle, even minor skirmishes, involving West Virginian recruits. There are times when this endless detail makes for very tiresome reading, but those with a true interest in West Virginia's involvement in the war will find this volume to be an invaluable tool. The writing is clear and the depth of research into primary sources is amazing. Snell's book is a landmark study of West Virginia's unique and tragic role in the Civil War.



Scott C. Patchan, *The Battle of Piedmont and Hunter's Raid on Staunton*. Charleston SC: The History Press, 2011. 190 pp.

The spring of 1864 saw the Civil War as a stalemate. Federal forces had won major battles in 1863 that certainly turned the tide of the war and gave the Union the advantage, but Lee's army had plenty of fight left, the Shenandoah Valley had not been penetrated, and Confederate forces elsewhere were holding their own. Many people in the North were tiring of the conflict and there was talk of a "peace candidate" in the 1864 presidential election who if successful might seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Even President Lincoln despaired at his chances for a second term. Certainly Confederates like General Lee hoped that his army could hold on long enough to force a stalemate and a negotiated peace.

Lincoln's selection of General Grant to lead Union forces was a gamble that eventually brought major dividends. Grant adopted an aggressive policy that included unrelenting attacks on Lee's army around Richmond and a concerted effort to capture or at least disrupt the Confederate hold on the Shenandoah Valley. The Valley was important for Southern fortunes not only because it supplied their armies with vital food supplies, but also it was the major transportation route to Kentucky, Tennessee, and elsewhere in the deep South. General Stonewall Jackson had defeated previous attempts by Northern forces to take the region in his famed Valley Campaign in 1862.

General Grant felt that the time had come to launch another strike into the Valley. While it may have been a bit premature to think of fully conquering the Valley from top to bottom, a meaningful attack there could have major pluses. The destruction of crops, supplies, railroad and other communications and industrial sites helping the South would hurt its long-term ability to wage war and a major invasion would force Lee to send reinforcements from Richmond, thus weakening his forces there.

A major Federal push into the Valley in May, 1864, met with defeat at the battle of New Market, but Grant was determined to try another invasion almost immediately. He appointed veteran General David Hunter to head a Union force whose mission was to destroy Confederate factories, supply lines, and other contraband of war. Hunter quickly led Union forces back to the Valley, largely catching the Confederates by surprise. Lee dispatched General William E. Jones to defend Staunton and the two forces collided at the fierce Battle of Piedmont northeast of



Staunton on 5 June 1864. There were huge casualties on both sides including General Jones, but by evening, Union forces had won and were able to march unimpeded into Staunton.

Union occupation of Staunton lasted less than a week. On the way to Staunton, author Scott Patchan notes that Hunter and his troops were horrified to find many boys aged fifteen or sixteen among the dead and wounded as well as a sixty-year-old Stauntonian who though a bit infirm had been recently conscripted into the army to defend his home town. Hunter noted that the South was beginning to face a real manpower shortage.

Union troops received a warm welcome by many residents of Augusta County as they marched toward Staunton, but when they reached the city they were surprised at the strong secessionist feelings of most Stauntonians. While in Staunton Hunter's troops burned or destroyed anything that could help the Confederate war effort including miles of train tracks, bridges, and local depots, a woolen mill, steam mill, a wagon and shoe factory, stables and forage houses. In cases where the burning of a building might endanger private homes, citizens were allowed to disassemble the workshops to avoid any conflagration of ordinary residences.

Hunter soon left not only Staunton but also the Valley to make an unsuccessful raid on Lynchburg and it would take Sheridan's Valley campaign months later to seal the region's fate. But Hunter's victory at Piedmont and his brief occupation of Staunton accomplished most of Grant's objectives. The South fought on for another ten months, but Hunter's raid was one of those hard punches that considerably weakened the South's ability to fight on.

Author Patchan devotes huge amounts of space to an excellent very detailed narrative of the Battle of Piedmont, which would delight the hardcore Civil War battle buff. I personally found Patchan's chapters on the occupation of Staunton and the importance of the Valley to the South to be of much greater interest. Nevertheless, the book is well written and incredibly well researched.

Laten Ervin Bechtel with Susie Brent King, *"That's Just The Way It Was": African-American Schools in Staunton and Augusta County.* Staunton, VA: Lot's Wife Publishing, 2010. 420 pp.

As we commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, we must not forget that the emancipation of slavery brought about revolutionary



changes in American society. The true liberation of a population enslaved for over two centuries took more than the stroke of a pen in 1863. Liberation has proved to be a long-term evolutionary process throughout the South with real change occurring in the 1960s with the Civil Rights movement and legislation that forced radical change and ensured integration.

The Staunton-Augusta region stands as a microcosm for a study of changing racial relations in a small Southern community. Slavery was a very viable concern here before the Civil War and the region stood squarely behind the Confederacy throughout the conflict. When the war ended, the federally mandated Freedman's Bureau entered the region and, among other work, began the task of creating schools to accommodate the newly liberated African-American population.

The Freedman's Bureau mandated the creation of these schools, but it was a case of "easier said than done." Money to start these schools and pay for teachers and books was scarce and there was little support coming from the white community. Nevertheless, only a year after the end of the war schools were up and running. There was some federal money and a few local benefactors, but aid from Northern religious groups such as the American Missionary Association was also essential. Many of the early teachers were from the North, but few stayed very long because of loneliness and hostility from the local white population.

Nevertheless, the response from the African-American population was enormous. Hundreds from Staunton and Augusta County surged into the schools eager to learn how to read and write. But the conditions they faced in these early years were really quite awful—few teaching materials, a constant turnover of teachers, and the lack of permanent facilities for schools. Nevertheless, student numbers grew and attendance in some schools was almost one hundred percent.

When the Virginia Department of Education took over the school system in the early 1870s with the termination of the Freedman's Bureau, it mandated the creation of separate but equal schools. Some of the early superintendents in Staunton personally hoped for integrated schools from the start, but the local white population was firmly in favor of segregation. The result was that although Black schools were always in existence, they received less money, students were housed in inferior conditions, and the teachers and school officials received lower salaries. Authors Laten Ervin Bechtel and Susie Brent King describe the "Jim Crow" era of the early 1900s:



The disfranchisement of African Americans from political life did not stop at the polling booth and in the halls of state and national legislatures. The rigid political climate, which had instituted Jim Crow into government and daily life, further exacerbated the growing neglect of black schools. As white leaders and educators began to implement innovations and ideas for schools, black schools suffered institutionalized neglect and as a result remained seemingly “frozen in time.” African Americans were forced out of political and social life, and as far as whites were concerned, their needs, including education, were not a priority or concern.

Staunton and Augusta County were no different from any place in the South. For more than fifty years, black children would be treated as second class citizens. They were given inferior quality in regard to anything that could elevate them or improve their lives: buildings, textbooks, supplies, and opportunities, and even teachers continued to receive lower pay compared to their white counterparts and were spread thin across packed classrooms. In July 1901, Principal Derritt’s monthly salary was \$42.72, compared to the principal of the white school who received almost double that figure. Also, the average salary for a black teacher was twenty-seven dollars per month compared to thirty-eight dollars per month for white teachers.... (84-85)

This situation remained in place until the schools became integrated in the mid-1960s.

Authors Bechtel and King have written and compiled an incredible history of the local African American school history. The detailed narrative history is in itself very impressive, but there are also many fascinating photographs, interviews, and quotes from former students who grew up in these schools, and a careful listing of all the local Black schools and the history of each school. The book is beautifully and carefully written and researched and is already a major source for local historians.

Revolutionary War Era

Michael Kranish, *Flight from Monticello: Thomas Jefferson at War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 388 pp.

Thomas Jefferson, erstwhile governor of Virginia, could hear the hoofs of British cavalry charging up the mountain to his home at Monticello when he jumped on his horse and fled to his family waiting at his other abode, Poplar Forest. Jefferson was now well beyond the range of Banastre Tarleton and his troops who had ventured to Charlottesville to capture the man who would have been the prize prisoner of the British.

This incident created one of the most embarrassing moments of Jefferson’s life. Governor Jefferson had moved his offices and the state’s legislature to Charlottesville when the British had approached Rich-



mond in late spring, 1781. However, when British forces approached Charlottesville on 4 June 1781, the legislators fled to Staunton where they set up business in the old Trinity Church while Jefferson fled south. Later several Virginian politicians complained that Jefferson should have gone to Staunton to provide leadership for a state that was shuttering under the guns of many thousands of British troops who had invaded the Commonwealth. Jefferson escaped official condemnation, however, and went on to become the new nation's premier diplomat and eventually its political leader.

Michael Kranish, a solid scholar of history and a Washington-based reporter for the *Boston Globe*, only devotes a small space of his lengthy book on Jefferson's flight from Monticello. *Flight From Monticello* is in fact an exhaustive research study of the British invasion of Virginia that began in January 1781, and ended many months later with the British surrender at Yorktown. The first hundred pages detail political life in the Commonwealth before and during the early stages of the Revolutionary War. We see young politicians like Patrick Henry and Jefferson taking up legislative duties in Williamsburg while anti-British and pro-independence sentiments were growing. We watch an infuriated legislature denounce the British governor, Lord Dunmore, choose its own leaders, and drive Dunmore and his supporters out to sea.

Most of the war's earlier fighting had occurred north of Virginia and in the Carolinas and Virginia experienced several years of relative peace although many of its young men had gone to fight in Washington's army. The war was not going terribly well for the British in 1780 when they decided that they could reverse their fortunes by seizing the new nation's wealthiest and largest state. At the start of January 1781, a large convoy of British ships sailed up the James River under the direction of recently turned Benedict Arnold.

The British faced only token resistance from the ragtag Virginia navy and small militia. Moving up the James, the British landed near Richmond and took Virginia's new capital without firing too many shots. A frantic Governor Jefferson traveled around the state trying to procure arms and additional troops to halt the invasion, but with limited luck. Many Virginians, including some living in the Shenandoah Valley, feared for their personal safety in a war with horrendous casualties and refused their governor's pleas for help. Kranish shows that Jefferson showed courage and determination in his efforts to defend Virginia, but



that he was virtually powerless to stop 17,000 or more well-trained British and Hessian troops.

After taking Richmond the British fanned out across Virginia seizing stores of tobacco and farm animals, burning a lot of valuable property, and even stopping at Mount Vernon. The British faced their first real test later on when Washington sent General Lafayette and a contingent of troops to lead the fight against the invaders. General Cornwallis, who had been leading his troops in a futile effort to seal off the Carolinas began moving north to Virginia. Washington then sent the bulk of his army to confront the British. A carefully orchestrated American attack on Yorktown combined with a blockade by the French navy led to the final British surrender.

Kranish provides a highly readable portrait of Virginia at war—we see Jefferson's disbelief that the British had landed, the pompous overconfidence and selfish desire for wealth of Arnold, constant maneuvering by the opposing troops, the critical role of spies, and a desperate and ultimately failed American plan to kidnap the treacherous Arnold. Kranish gives us a fascinating view of a little studied part of the Revolutionary War. *Flight from Monticello* is must reading for any student or scholar of Virginia history.

Jack Rakove, *Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010. 487 pp.

Jack Rackove, distinguished professor of history at Stanford University and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in the mid-1990s, has attempted the almost impossible—a comprehensive historical analysis of the American Revolution. This is a most difficult task because of the highly complex nature of the Revolution. One must include not only all the events that led up to the struggle, but also domestic politics in Britain and the formation of an entirely new government after the war ended in 1783. Fortunately for the reader, Rakove is largely successful in his endeavor.

There is one note of local importance in this extensive work. Rackove, in a long section on Thomas Jefferson, recounts how in May, 1781, then Virginia Governor Jefferson left Richmond along with the rest of the state assembly to Charlottesville to escape a broad British invasion of the state. A week later British cavalry leader Banastre Tarleton led his troops into Charlottesville in an attempt to capture Jefferson and as many assembly leaders as he could find. Only a timely alert allowed



the lawmakers to slip across the mountains to Staunton, but they went without Jefferson. As the cavalymen were ascending the mountain to arrest Jefferson at his home, he mounted his horse and fled to his other home at Poplar Forest where his family had taken refuge. The lawmakers thus had to make do without a governor until they elected Thomas Nelson in mid-June to fill the post.

Rakove is very critical of Jefferson: "Had Jefferson rallied to Staunton and acted until a successor was named, no one would have blamed him for stretching constitutional propriety. By seeming to favor private happiness over public safety, he could be faulted for abandoning his post in a moment of dire need." (309)

Moving beyond this one incident, Rakove does give a careful rendition of the major events of the era, but the critical distinction of this work is his presentation of interlocking biographical narratives of the major actors in this drama. He reminds us that there were in fact two generations of leaders who emerged on the American side—the older generation that came of age before the Revolution and led the effort—men like Samuel and John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and General Washington—and a younger generation that matured during the conflict and became leaders after the war—including men like Alexander Hamilton and James Madison.

Rakove reminds the reader that these men were made by the Revolution, not just the makers of it. Too often we read about our founding fathers as if they were saints, greater than life giants who appeared just in time to form the hallowed American Republic. Rakove shows them as well-educated, but quite ordinary plantation owners, lawyers, and people from a variety of other professions who got caught up in the fray. Most of them would have been quite content to maintain some form of association with Britain had not the British monarchy and Parliament sought bitter coercive measures, especially in Massachusetts. It was the harsh British reaction of closing down the port of Boston that enraged so many Americans—the proverbial straw that broke the back of the British Empire in North America.

Rakove makes some interesting points of how Congress, perhaps inadvertently, took steps which began the process of uniting thirteen very independent colonies. The naming of General Washington, a Virginian, as head of the new American army that was being formed in Massachusetts in 1775 was a start—and the further development of an



army with soldiers from all the colonies was a further bond that bound the colonies together. The brutal and often blundering tactics of the British army also turned many indifferent Americans against London.

Three very lengthy biographical chapters of Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton at the end of the book are perhaps the most interesting aspect of this work. He traces the work of each of these leaders—the diplomatic and political career of Jefferson and his role in shaping such ideas as religious liberty; the work of Madison in leading the struggle to write the Constitution; and the masterwork of Hamilton in building what would become a strong central government.

Rakove's book is not easy reading as his writing can be ponderous and occasionally dull, but his coverage and knowledge of detail is outstanding. We see the various paths this nation could have taken in its early days and the struggles by our early leaders, many of whom strongly disagreed and disliked each other, to muddle out a compromise. It is a brilliantly researched and very full volume that should be read and discussed by any serious student of early American history.

Rakove shows us how these legendary figures were a bundle of results as well as forceful agents of history. They were made by the Revolution, he keeps reminding his readers, not just the makers of it. Too often, books about these men, taken together or presented individually, render them larger than life, and abstract them out of the dense social, cultural, and political matrix that defined their opportunities and their challenges. Rakove manages to demystify the leaders of the Revolutionary era even while clarifying the terms on which they continue to deserve our admiration.

Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. 460 pages.

It is said that the victors write history while losers often disappear. This expression is certainly true when it comes to the American Revolution. When the last British troops pulled out of New York City on 25 November 1783, patriots celebrated their great victory and thus began the illustrious history of the American republic. But for tens of thousands of Americans, the departure of the British marked perhaps one of the hardest days of their lives. They had chosen to side with and often fight alongside of the British and now they were no longer welcome in the land of their birth.



It is estimated that while fully one-quarter of all American colonists decided to stay loyal to Britain in 1776, roughly three percent or 75,000 decided to live in exile rather than stay in the new American republic. There then began a diaspora that was truly worldwide. A few loyalists went to Britain where they endeavored with some success to rebuild their lives, often with the help of financial assistance from the Loyalist Claims Commission, which compensated many for the land they had lost or abandoned in North America. A good number of southerners left South Carolina and Georgia for the British-held territory of East Florida, but to their horror the British returned Florida to Spain as part of the peace treaty that ended the conflict between the two nations. The exiles from Florida then flocked to the Bahamas, Jamaica, and elsewhere. A much larger contingent sailed from such places as New York to Nova Scotia and made Halifax and surrounding regions their home while others went further south to found New Brunswick. Others trudged north into Quebec and Ontario to form the roots of British Canada.

Demographically, the loyalists represented every ethnic group and social class living in the colonies. There were wealthy landowners, bakers, tailors, and many African Americans, some of them slaves and others freemen including a good number who had been slaves but who had fled their masters to cross British lines lured with promises of freedom. The British honored their promise and took a large number of them to Nova Scotia. Twelve hundred African Americans soon left the frigid wet climate of Nova Scotia to fulfill a British scheme to build a colony for freemen in Sierra Leone.

Harvard University historian Maya Jasanoff has conducted extensive research in all of the major destinations where the Loyalists went including Britain, Canada, the West Indies, the Bahamas, and Sierra Leone to find out what happened to these people once they left the United States. She tells their history in two ways—by selecting certain families and tracing their lives and also by describing each new settlement in a very general sense. She tells that although many of the exiles saw themselves as loyal subjects of the King, many shared the rebellious and independent streaks of their American cousins and refused arbitrary rule by the British. Their demands for liberty created the democratic traditions that we find today in Canada and elsewhere.

Maya Jasanoff has done a brilliant job piecing together the complex and fascinating story of the Loyalists. This book probably repre-



sents the best study of what happened to these people wherever they went. It is a masterpiece of historical writing and scholarship.

Civil War Era

Adam Goodheart. *1861: The Civil War Awakening*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. 481 pp.

—Reviewed by ACHS board member Ralph Ruedy

The flyleaf of Adam Goodheart's superb study describes it as "a gripping and original account of how the Civil War began," but Augusta County readers will look in vain for mention of Virginia's contentious 1861 secession convention in Richmond that spring; indeed, the names of Staunton's A.H.H. Stuart and John Baldwin do not even appear in the index. Rather, Goodheart's focus is on the Union, and he has chosen to structure his study not as a straightforward historical narrative of events during this pivotal year, but rather as a series of vignettes that focus on famous figures (or ones who would soon become famous) or events that, in his view, encapsulate the feelings of the time. Throughout, he maintains the view that a fundamental shift in public consciousness was underway in the North, one that would not only support a long and bloody war to preserve the nation, but also one that would also fundamentally alter it and, in the process, inevitably extinguish the southern states' cherished "peculiar institution" of considering blacks as property, to be bought and sold.

Some of Goodheart's subjects will be familiar, although he brings new information and insights to them. Despite the "1861" of his title, he begins his study in Charleston Harbor in December, 1860, where a tiny Union garrison held out at Fort Sumter under "a banner at daybreak." Goodheart's focus is on the feelings that the garrison's plight aroused in the press and public in the north, the stubborn resourcefulness of Major Robert Anderson, the unlikely hero who commanded the fort, and the difficult decisions Sumter's very existence posed for political leaders on both sides. Not surprisingly, he returns to Sumter in a later chapter, when he describes Sumter's fall and the hostilities the Confederate bombardment finally precipitated.

While the basic outlines of the Sumter story will be familiar to anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of Civil War history, some of the other chapters in Goodheart's work focus on less familiar subjects. Again, he feels free to range back to 1860 and before. Who has heard of



the “Wide Awakes,” the young men in Boston and other northern cities, determined that the era of compromise and surrender to perceived Southern arrogance must end? Or the activities of Jessie Fremont, wife of the indomitable Pathfinder, who pushed the Union cause in California and Nevada? Or to the New York City Fire Department, whose enthusiastic young volunteers stirred to the sight of splendid uniforms and the voice of nationalism? These and other seemingly unlikely subjects are examples that Goodheart weaves into his study.

One of his most memorable chapters focuses on Virginia’s Fort Monroe in May 1861. Goodheart recounts how Benjamin Butler, the commanding general who had been a soldier for all of five weeks, made a quick decision that would prove monumental. This is how Goodheart tells the story of three escaped slaves who suddenly appeared at the fort:

Ever the diligent scholar of jurisprudence, Butler had been reading up on his military law. In time of war, he knew, a commander has a right to seize and hold any enemy property that was being used for belligerent purposes. The three fugitive slaves, before their escape, had been helping build a Confederate gun emplacement. Very well, then—if the Southerners insisted on treating blacks as property, this Yankee lawyer would treat them as property, too. In that case, he has much justification in confiscating Baker, Mallory, and Townsend as he would in intercepting a shipment of muskets or swords. Legally speaking, Butler’s position was unassailable.

Butler’s refusal to return the “contrabands,” Goodheart makes clear, inevitably made abolition a Union war aim. How could any return to the union also involve returning these human “contrabands” to their owners? Clearly, even in the spring of 1861, that was no longer possible.

Interestingly, Goodheart’s study has been cited by citizen groups seeking to preserve Fort Monroe, now that the U.S. Army has announced plans to leave the property. Developers have salivated at the huge profit potential of the site, in the middle of the metropolitan sprawl of the Virginia Tidewater. Preservationists have argued the historical significance of the fort, in numerous wars over several centuries. Goodheart’s book ties Fort Monroe to the cause of black freedom, and the events recounted in his narrative are now cited as a major reason why Fort Monroe must be preserved, perhaps under the auspices of the National Park Service.

Almost endearingly, Goodheart ends his study in the way a good Victorian novelist would—by offering a series of postscripts that describe the eventual fates of some of the memorable figures his book has



brought to life. An example: “The three original contrabands all remained in the Hampton Roads area after the war. Frank Baker and James Townsend raised families and worked as day laborers; neither ever learned to read or write.” While his characters are “dismissed” to history, Goodheart’s study stands as a solid contribution to the vast literature of the Civil War, and helps the reader to see why, even as the first shots were being readied, it was apparent that this war would change America forever. And so it has.

Gary W. Gallagher. *The Union War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

—Reviewed by ACHS board member Ralph Ruedy

As it happens, I picked up Gary Gallagher’s *The Union War*, just before Memorial Day, 2011, when I visited several old cemeteries in my native Iowa County, Iowa. Here were a number—a large number, actually—of graves of veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic. Some presumably died as old men on their prosperous Iowa farms, full of stories about their youthful exploits. Some, according to the worn markers on their graves, died much younger, in places like Shiloh and Gettysburg. What motivated these young Iowa farm boys to march off and fight, and fight so hard and so long? They had never seen a slave or a slave owner, and never would. Richmond and Washington were a thousand miles away. No Confederates would ever march against Iowa. And still they went, enduring almost unbelievable sacrifices, and repeatedly showing their willingness to die. Many did. Why?

This is essentially the question Gallagher tries to answer in *The Union War*. Gallagher is one of our leading Civil War historians, with numerous books and scholarly articles to his credit. The long series of lectures he recorded for The Teaching Company provide a superb overview of the Civil War period—no doubt the equivalent of an excellent survey course in the history department at the University of Virginia, where Gallagher is a distinguished professor. In *The Union War*, he sets out to do for the North what he did for the South in *The Confederate War* over ten years ago: explain why soldiers and citizens seemed willing to endure almost unspeakable sacrifice to prevail in a struggle whose length and violence no one could possibly have predicted in 1861.

The flyleaf describes this as a “revisionist history,” and in many senses, it probably is. Gallagher’s thesis is that the notion of “union”



motivated the North. In ways that are probably impossible for us to understand now, those Iowa boys—and boys from Maine and New York and Wisconsin, and even Kentucky and all the other states and territories that cast their lot with the North—believed that “the Union” was the legacy the founding fathers had left us. “Union” they equated with democracy and freedom, and the free and democratic union that the United States represented was man’s last best hope on earth, a beacon to people around the world. The slaveholders of the South, they believed, represented an incipient oligarchy. Their attempt to break up the sacred Union represented no less than treason to America’s ideals, and if blood was the price of putting down rebellion and preserving the Union, so be it.

Gallagher spends a good deal of time (perhaps too much) citing and disproving the views of other historians who are more inclined to see abolition of slavery in the North’s motivation. While that analysis may satisfy our contemporary sense of justice, Gallagher is firm in rejecting it. As a professional historian, he reminds us that the past is indeed a foreign country in many respects, with customs and underlying cultural assumptions that are foreign and almost impossible to understand. He cites newspapers, letters, and diaries written at the time, and remains firm in the view that only by studying their own words can we figure out what those long-ago people really thought and felt. Some of it is far from pretty. Gallagher quotes opinions of the time that are blatantly racist, but indicates that these are views that we must face squarely if we are to get at historical truth.

Gallagher’s study also makes it very clear, however, that whatever the rhetoric before, during, and after the war, slavery was clearly its root cause, and Union victory would inevitably and inexorably involve its elimination. “State’s rights” for the Confederate States meant, after all, their right to maintain and expand to the territories their “peculiar institution” of the ownership of human beings, and protecting their financial stake in their human property. He states at the conclusion of *The Confederate War*:

It defies modern understanding that any people—especially one in which non-slaveholding yeomen formed a solid majority—would pour energy and resources into a fight profoundly tainted by the institution of slavery. Yet the Confederate people did so. Until historians can explain more fully why they did, the story of the Civil War will remain woefully incomplete.



This book by one of our leading contemporary historians of the Civil War tries to unravel what motivated those men whose graves I saw amidst the rich Iowa prairie. In writing it, Gallagher has provided us with yet another basis for historical understanding and a valuable contribution to the history of the American Civil War.

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Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010. 435 pp.

So many books have been written about Abraham Lincoln that one must wonder why the need is there for one more. Nevertheless, Eric Foner, professor of history at Columbia University, brings us one of the definitive histories of Lincoln in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Fiery Trial*. Foner's work is not a true biography of Lincoln—we learn very little of his personal life and family. Rather, it is a meticulous study of the evolution of Lincoln's ideas concerning slavery from his days as a young lawyer and legislator in Illinois to his final days as President. What is ironic is how the changes in Lincoln's views on this subject also reflect the changing consensus in the North and throughout much of the United States on this subject.

Foner begins his narrative with a study of Lincoln's youth in Indiana and Illinois and follows the trajectory of his career across the increasingly tense frontier of American politics to his election in 1860 and his difficult and ultimately tragic presidency. We see that Lincoln was against slavery even as a young man, but that he was never a radical abolitionist. Always playing the role of a moderate, Lincoln supported the notion that the Constitution protected slavery in the states where it was practiced. Although he called for the end of slavery, he saw this termination coming through an evolutionary process. He would halt the spread of slavery, but would not interfere with it in the regions where it flourished. Lincoln believed that the African-American had certain natural rights that included the right to follow his own career and to get justly paid for the fruits of his labor, but that the former slave was not the intellectual equal of the white man—and that he might not qualify to enjoy the civil rights of a white man.



Always the ambitious politician, Lincoln had to balance politics with his anti-slavery views upon his election. He had to work hard to build a very delicate antislavery coalition that would include radical Republicans on the one hand and conservative Unionists on the other. Lincoln was adamantly opposed to granting endless concessions to the South to keep the southern states in the Union. He predicted that the South would blackmail the federal government with threats of secession until the government had nothing more to give. But at the same time Lincoln had to soothe the ruffled feelings of such border states as Kentucky, Missouri, Delaware, and Maryland that had significant slave populations, but which had to be kept in the Union. Lincoln predicted that all would be lost if those states joined the Confederacy. Those states did remain in the Union and as the war progressed, Lincoln was able to take more ambitious stands as the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862-63 and the admission of black troops into the Union army. Ultimately Lincoln was able to embrace the “fundamental and astounding” result of the Civil War—the immediate and uncompensated end to slavery and the recognition of African Americans as American citizens. As the cautious moderate, Lincoln, in the end, had become the radical emancipator, but he was quite embarrassed when walking through the streets of Richmond in early April 1865 when thousands of former slaves, many of whom were released from slave pens that very day, embraced Lincoln as a virtual God. Foner writes:

Lincoln did not enter the White House expecting to preside over the destruction of slavery. A powerful combination of events...propelled him down the road to emancipation and then to a reconsideration of the place blacks would occupy in a post-slavery America. Of course, the unprecedented crisis in which, as one member of Congress put it, ‘the events of an entire century transpire in a year,’ made change the order of the day. Yet as the presidency of his successor demonstrated, not all men in a similar situation possessed the capacity for growth, the essence of Lincoln’s greatness. ‘I think we have reason to thank God for Abraham Lincoln,’ the abolitionist Lydia Maria Child wrote one week before his death. ‘With all his deficiencies, it must be admitted that he has grown continuously; and considering how slavery had weakened and perverted the moral sense of the whole country, it was great good luck to have the people elect a man who was willing to grow.’

Any serious student of the Civil War and American history should read this work with great care.



James Swanson, *Bloody Crimes: The Chase for Jefferson Davis and the Death Pageant for Lincoln's Corpse*. New York; HarperCollins, 2010. 464 pp,

At the start of April 1865 two American presidents lived in two White Houses separated by only a few dozen miles apart. They respected each other, but were also deadly enemies. Just a few days later, one had fled his capital with his cabinet while the other lay dead on public view in the East Room of his home. One immediately became a saintly martyr, the savior of his nation while the other became a wanted man, then a tormented prisoner, and finally also a martyr representing a noble and just but very defeated cause.

April 1865 was one of the most critical times of American history. A bitter Civil War had come to an end with Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Lee could have urged his troops to take to the mountains to fight a prolonged guerilla war, but instead he surrendered his troops and brought his fight to an end. Grant in turn graciously sent Lee and his troops home. Lincoln urged national unification with "malice towards none," but his sudden death on Good Friday bought an outpouring of emotion in the North the likes of which the nation had never seen.

Swanson, whose earlier book *Manhunt*, the story of the search for John Wilkes Booth after Lincoln's murder, was well received, again gives us a very detailed portrait of the United States just before and after the end of the Civil War. We are introduced to both Lincoln and Jefferson, their families and cohorts and get to know the two leaders on a rather intimate basis. We suffer with both Davis and Lincoln when they lose their adored sons at the height of the war; we travel with Lincoln as he enters the Confederate capital of Richmond just as Confederate troops had abandoned the city and had set fire to many buildings; we travel with Davis as he and his cabinet ride a slow moving train to Danville and then Greensboro and we get a minute-by-minute account of Lincoln's dying hours after he had been shot.

The main plot of Swanson's tale revolves around Lincoln's prolonged death voyage by train to New York and through the Midwest. His embalmed body was put on display at virtually every stop allowing his countrymen to pour out their sorrow in front of his corpse. Davis and his family traveled by horse through South Carolina and Georgia before being captured by Union troops. Lincoln got a rousing funeral in Springfield, Illinois, while Davis suffered the indignity of being shackled in Fort Monroe in Virginia.



Swanson concludes his work by examining the last twenty-five years of Jefferson Davis' life. Davis became a spokesman for the South and admirably lectured and wrote on the noble cause of the South. He gained huge popularity late in life when he attended several reunions of Confederate troops and his funeral train in 1889 gathered much of the same reverence in the South that Lincoln's body had received in the North. But, as Swanson notes, the twentieth century certainly belonged to Lincoln while Davis became a rather forgotten hero.

Swanson's book offers very little new information on his topic, but his research is sound and he is a superb storyteller. Frankly, I had a hard time putting this book down—I highly recommend it. My only complaints are his portrayals of Davis and Mrs. Lincoln. We learn that Davis was "a humorless, arrogant, inflexible, racist, slave-owning traitor." But he was not humorless and certainly had very romantic ties to both his wives. He was hardly arrogant and he was certainly a very able Senator, Secretary of War, military hero in Mexico, and an able leader of a doomed nation. We rarely if ever see the tender and warmer side of Mrs. Lincoln who is readily dismissed as a mad woman by the author.

Kate Clifford Larson, *The Assassin's Accomplice: Mary Surratt and the Plot to Kill Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Basic Books, 2008. 263 pp.

Recently I conducted an informal survey of friends and relatives asking whether they had ever heard of Mary Surratt. The results were hardly surprising. Mary Surratt is largely forgotten today, a small footnote in history, but in 1865 she was perhaps the most famous (or infamous) woman in the United States with the possible exception of Mrs. Lincoln. She was probably also the most reviled woman in the country because she was one of eight shadowy persons arrested, tried and convicted as conspirators in the murder of Abraham Lincoln. She was also one of four of the alleged conspirators who was hung on a hot July day in 1865 only days after their conviction. Surratt was also the first woman ever executed by the U.S. Government.

I had come across Surratt's name in many of the books I have read on the Civil War and had assumed that she was an unfortunate dupe whose Washington boarding house was used as a meeting place for John Wilkes Booth and the other conspirators. Surratt always proclaimed her innocence and I believed her account. But having read Kate Clifford Larson's I have begun to have doubts. Though extensive research through



court transcripts, memoirs, and other records, the author shows conclusively that Mary Surratt was one of the conspirators. "Mary Surratt did indeed keep 'the nest that hatched the egg.' She could have chosen not to help Booth, but she decided to assist him in whatever way she could. In providing a warm home, private encouragement, and material support to Abraham Lincoln's murderer, she offered more than most of Booth's other supporters. For that, Mary Surratt lost her life and must forever be remembered as the assassin's accomplice."

However, one cannot read the accounts of Surratt's trial without feeling some degree of sympathy. Her son, John, who was also believed to have been a conspirator, but had been in New York state at the time of the assassination and who later hid in Canada, never came to testify on her behalf. Her main lawyer excused himself after his opening remarks and her main defense was led by a couple of incompetents whose questioning of defense witnesses only served to strengthen the prosecution's defense. Surratt was also vilified in the Northern press. As Larson writes, "Vilified and caricatured in the mostly Northern newspapers that carried reports from the court room, Mary endured almost continual aspersions against her femininity, religion, age, physical appearance, and demeanor." President Andrew Johnson would show her absolutely no mercy when he received petitions for clemency.

Larson, a history professor at Simmons College in Boston, provides excellent coverage of Mary Surratt's life and comings and goings in the months and days before the assassination including her very suspicious activities on the day of Lincoln's murder. The pretrial interrogations and the trial itself are reported in minute detail, leaving little doubt that Surratt was involved in the conspiracy to initially kidnap Lincoln and later in his murder. Had I been one of the judges at this military tribunal, I would have been shocked at the weakness of her defense and probably would have voted for conviction (though not necessarily death).

The Assassin's Accomplice is a very good read for anybody interested in this piece of Civil War history.

Post Civil War through World War I

H.W. Brands, *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism*. New York: Doubleday, 2010. 614 pp.

The American Revolution created the United States and the Civil War forged the country into one union, but it was the four decades after the



Civil War that saw the transformation of the U.S. into a major economic power and laid the foundation for the nation's emergence as a major world power. During this time the American economy exploded in size and what had been a largely rural and agricultural nation became increasingly urban and industrial. America's industrial revolution saw the massive spread of the railroad, the development of major industrial combines, and a host of modern inventions including the modern light bulb, the telephone and the first automobiles.

By the start of the twentieth century the American economy had grown to be the largest, most productive and in some respects one of the most technically advanced in the world. A century ago steel production was the measure of a nation's economic power. Before the start of the Civil War, the United States had imported most of its steel, mainly from the British, but by 1900 it produced more steel than both Britain and Germany combined and was exporting large amounts to both nations. At the same time the United States became one of the major producers of petroleum and led the way in transforming energy production from coal and wind to oil.

H.W. Brands, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, has written superb biographies in recent years of Andrew Jackson, Benjamin Franklin, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Here the biographical subject is the American economy itself. Brands introduces the reader to the motley crew of industrialists, inventors, financiers, and entrepreneurs who drove this capitalist revolution: Morgan, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Vanderbilt, and many others. These giants drove the American economy, but at the same time threatened the very foundations of the nation's democracy. Brands notes:

In accomplishing its revolution, capitalism threatened to eclipse American democracy. Morgan never ran for political office, but his mastery of finance afforded him more power than any elected official save the president, and sometimes even more than the president. No senator or governor so directly controlled the lives of so many people as Carnegie.... Rockefeller held whole regions hostage to his petroleum monopoly.... Wealth had always conferred power, but never had a class of Americans been so wealthy as the great capitalists of the late nineteenth century, and never had such a small class wielded such incommensurate power. (7)

Brands chronicles the massive rise of American capitalism, but devotes as much if not more attention to the forces that coalesced to pro-



tect their interests against big industry. We see the rise of labor, the growing strength of progressive politics in the Prairie States, the trust-busting politics of Teddy Roosevelt and the like. Great attention is given to the many great labor strikes of the period like the infamous Homestead and Pullman strikes and the deadly Haymarket riot. It was a turbulent period of great change. We meet the last remnants of Native American resistance, massive immigration from Europe and Asia, and the rise of Jim Crow and racism in the South.

Many standard history texts can be frankly very boring, but there is nothing dull about Brands' style of writing. I found his biographies of Andrew Jackson and FDR to be irresistible, hard to put down. The same can be said of *American Colossus*—it's an exciting, lively text that is well researched with excellent sources. It should be used as a text for any course on the period and for any intelligent armchair historian.

Edmund Morris, *Colonel Roosevelt*. New York: Random House, 2010. 763 pp.

When I was a child growing up in New York City, my anthropologist mother, Rhoda Métraux, shared an office with her partner and colleague, anthropologist Margaret Mead in the American Museum of Natural History. I spent hundreds of hours wandering the halls of the great museum, often accompanied by my mother or Dr. Mead. I especially loved the African and North and South American mammals halls and listened with fascination how they told me that many of the stuffed animals displayed there in their natural habitats had been procured by Teddy Roosevelt on his expeditions to the West, Africa, and Brazil. There was also a large hall devoted to Roosevelt's life including exams he took at Harvard and many of his books. My grandmother, who was born in 1887, remembered coming home from school one day and meeting TR as he was campaigning for governor of New York near her home in Brooklyn in 1898. Thus I have always felt a special connection with and fascination for Roosevelt.

Edmund Morris has written a fascinating trilogy on Roosevelt's life: *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* covers his life until he became President in 1901; *Theodore Rex* deals with his presidency (1901-1909), and *Colonel Roosevelt* takes us from the White House until his death at an early age in 1919. Morris, a brilliant historian and gifted writer, is greatly helped by the fact that Roosevelt left us a mountain of material to work with. It is said that TR wrote well over one hundred thousand letters as well as a massive collection of books and articles.



Colonel Roosevelt begins with TR's lengthy Africa safari immediately after he left the White House. Following the safari he and his wife made a triumphant tour of Europe where he met virtually every head of state (including a very dead Edward VII of Britain), all of whom treated TR as royalty and presumptive future President of the U.S. We learn of his growing disenchantment with his chosen successor, William Howard Taft, whose weakness as a leader and supposed collaboration with arch-conservative leaders of the Republican Party led TR to believe that the progressive agenda he had set for the country was being torn apart.

Roosevelt made most of his money writing books and torrents of magazine articles, all of which kept him in the public eye. When he chose to defend his progressive agenda, which he called the "New Nationalism," he had to challenge Taft for the 1912 GOP presidential nomination. The Taft-Roosevelt campaign exposed deep differences between conservative and moderate elements of the Republican Party, rifts that persist to this very day. Taft controlled the party machinery that delivered his victory over TR even though TR had clobbered Taft in most of the primaries they had competed in. TR ran as a "Bull Moose" Progressive and easily bested Taft in the general election, but the split Republican vote brought victory to Woodrow Wilson.

After the election TR went on a nearly fatal scientific and exploratory visit to remote regions of Brazil. He returned to New York in time to witness the start of World War I in Europe. It is at this time that we see TR in a more negative light—as his shrill and well-publicized attacks on Wilson's war diplomacy drew increased public criticism. Morris suggests that TR's vehement attacks on Wilson during the 1916 presidential campaign while campaigning for the GOP candidate Justice Hughes may well have backfired and cost Hughes the election.

Morris' narrative ends with Roosevelt's misery upon learning of his son Quentin's death in combat in France followed immediately by his almost total physical collapse and death in January 1919. Morris speculates that had TR been healthy and alive in 1920, he could easily have been elected to a third term in the White House.

The Colonel is a brilliant piece of historical writing. There are also hilarious touches of humor—my favorite line pertains to a time when historian Henry Adams was taking a walk outside his home near the White House and he encountered President Taft and his aide, Archy Butt, walking alone in Lafayette Park. "Henry Adams, walking at dusk in downtown Washington, was accosted by what he at first took to be a hippopotamus."



James Chace, 1912: *Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft and Debs: The Election That Changed the Country*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004 and 2008. 323 pp.

The 1912 presidential election was one of the great contests of American electoral history. Four extraordinary men sought the presidency that year: Theodore Roosevelt, the still wildly popular former president who sought to move the Republican Party toward a more progressive and nationalistic bent with a special concern for social justice; Roosevelt's handpicked successor and incumbent, William Howard Taft, who had adopted a more conservative set of policies that convinced Roosevelt that Taft had abandoned the reformist agenda he had set while in office; Woodrow Wilson, the governor of New Jersey and former president of Princeton University, who promised reform while advocating limited government; and labor leader Eugene V. Debs, who had run for president twice before on the Socialist ticket.

Chace begins his narrative with Theodore Roosevelt's return in 1910 from his African safari. Roosevelt was still professing his strong support for Taft and even visited him at his summer White House north of Boston, but he was already having misgivings concerning the conservative and what he regarded as the weak leadership of Taft whom he believed had caved in to the conservative agenda set by Republican leaders in Congress. Roosevelt had in mind a much more active and progressive agenda and before long launched his own campaign which "anticipated the industrial and social service state that came into being under another President Roosevelt later in the century, along with its use of executive power on behalf of its citizens." To this day, notes Chace, "TR's New Nationalism remains one of the most radical covenants for idealistic reform ever offered in American history."

Chace offers a very detailed description and analysis of the campaign. He is a bit less than charitable in his opinions of Wilson, who appears closed minded when his programs are opposed by others and when compromise would move his ideas along. Chace, a former professor of government and public law at Bard College, correctly lauds Wilson's progressive credentials, but also criticizes his inherent racism and his pro-segregationist policies as President. Chace is also quite charitable with Debs who, knowing that he had no chance of actually winning the election, hoped to garner enough votes to create a socialist base that would make further advances in the future. Debs, a frail individual at the best



of times, campaigned vigorously across the country, always gathering large crowds. On occasion, however, he would collapse out of sheer fatigue. We also learn a great deal about Deb's personal life including his increasingly unhappy marriage. We also meet a very dispirited Taft who knows full well that he will lose the election, but fights hard to get the GOP nomination out of his sheer frustration at Roosevelt's attempts to destroy his presidency. Once he got the nomination, however, Taft made little or no attempt to campaign, restricting himself to two public speeches while the other candidates criss-crossed the country seeking votes.

Chace is most effective when he discusses how the broken friendship between Taft and Roosevelt inflicted wounds and divisions in the Republican Party between moderate and conservative camps that persisted into this century. We saw the classic divide in 1964 when the two wings of the party clashed over the candidacies of Barry Goldwater and Nelson Rockefeller and again in recent months between main stream and Tea Party conservative Republicans.

Chace's *1912* is a fast and interesting read that brings this vibrant and important campaign very much to life.

Evan Thomas, *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst and the Rush to Empire*. New York: Little Brown & Co., 2010. 410 pp.

Much has been written about the first phase of the Spanish American War of 1898. The antics of young yet powerful politicians like Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts and Theodore Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy and the "yellow journalism" of William Randolph Hearst played a decisive role in pushing the United States into a quick victory over Spanish forces in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The war spread to the Pacific when a small American naval fleet quickly dispatched the rag-tag Spanish squadron in Manila Bay.

But that was not the end of the story. Philippine forces led by Emilio Aguinaldo, the president of the newly proclaimed Republic of the Philippines, demanded that American forces leave his country. Tensions grew when American troops remained and by February, 1899, sharp fighting broke out between Filipino and U.S. troops. The subsequent Philippine-American War, which lasted four years, was very much different than the war against Spain. The United States eventually won, but at great cost. U.S. forces killed up to a quarter million Filipinos and in turn lost up to five thousand dead and many more wounded. As author Evan



Thomas notes, the American “public grew weary as the war metastasized into an ugly counterinsurgency in the Philippines, which America had occupied after defeating the Spanish navy at Manila. It was a conflict that dragged on for four more years, included atrocities and torture on both sides (Americans first used waterboarding).”

The War in the Philippines, however, is just an afterthought in a book that focuses almost entirely on the events leading to the war with Spain in Cuba and the war itself. Thomas, an editor at *Newsweek* who has written extensively on various facets of American history, does a superb job in analyzing the political machinations of Roosevelt and Lodge as well as the irresponsible and often untruthful or exaggerated journalism of Hearst. We get an almost blow-by-blow of Roosevelt’s Rough Riders as they trounce Spanish forces in the hills of Cuba. We also get a very sympathetic portrait of House Speaker Thomas Reed of Maine who was bitterly opposed to American military expansionism and the build-up of the Navy so fervently pushed by Roosevelt and his allies.

The goal of this book is to focus on the politics that led to the war in Cuba. Even though this is an oft-told story, Thomas is a marvelous story teller who has the uncanny ability to read the minds of each of his subjects and to provide us with their contributions to the conflict. In this sense, Thomas has achieved his mission admirably, but he like so many other writers virtually ignores the subsequent conflict in the Philippines.

The Philippine War was America’s first overseas conflict, but it is basically ignored not only here, but also in virtually every text I have ever read on American history. Why is this so? Was this war so ugly and the tortures and killing by Americans so ugly that we want to bury our shame? One exemplary American general, “Howling Jake” Smith (1840-1918) ordered the massacre of many innocent Filipinos. He carried on the following conversation with a subordinate, Major Littleton Waller:

“I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn, the more you kill and burn the better it will please me. I want all persons killed who are capable of bearing arms in actual hostilities against the United States,” General Jacob H. Smith said.

Since it was a popular belief among the Americans serving in the Philippines that native males were born with bolos in their hands, Major Waller asked “I would like to know the limit of age to respect, sir?”

“Ten years,” Smith said.

“Persons of ten years and older are those designated as being capable of bearing arms?”



"Yes." Smith confirmed his instructions a second time

It is a shame that Thomas did not choose to discuss this later war with the same fervor as he does with Cuba.

Ernest Freeberg, *Democracy's Prisoner: Eugene V. Debs, The Great War, and the Right to Dissent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. 380 pp.

The scenario has a most familiar ring: an unpopular war, a controversial erudite president, high-minded vows to spread democracy abroad, anger at high immigration rates, a growing gap between rich and poor, rising unemployment, and a growing nostalgia for "the good old days." The irony is that we are describing the United States near the end of Staunton-born Woodrow Wilson's administration rather than the trauma of the Bush-Obama years.

Ernest Freeberg, a professor of history at the University of Tennessee, has produced a fascinating study of this tumultuous era in American history. His focus is on Eugene V. Debs, the leading socialist politician in the United States. Debs, a long-time labor leader and organizer ran on the Socialist ticket for president five times between 1900 and 1920, on occasion garnering over a million votes and in his last campaign running from a jail cell in Atlanta where he was serving a ten-year prison term for his alleged violation of the recently enacted Espionage Act that sought to temper public criticism of this country's entry into World War I.

Debs was a major figure in American politics at the dawn of the last century. He had a huge following among working-class Americans, but was an anathema to the country's business and political elites. His impassioned speeches, which were often evangelical in their tone and effect, often drew huge crowds and impressive coverage in the national media. He spoke of the needs and rights of the working man, and although he was very receptive to the news of the success of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917-1918, he was no communist radical. He was a social reformer, not a revolutionary activist.

The 1917 Espionage Act was designed to curtail speech and activities that would promote insubordination in the military, conflict with conscription, and give support to the enemy. The Wilson administration used the law, however, to imprison thousands of Americans who spoke out against the war and America's participation in the conflict.



At the same time, government censors working under Wilson's strict guidance actively silenced dozens of newspapers and magazines that ran articles and editorials critical of the administration. At the time a patriotic group known as the American Defense Society declared, "Those who are not for us, must be against us." A pro-war congressman advised, "People should go ahead and obey the law, keep their mouths shut, and let the government run the war."

When Debs questioned America's entry into World War I, he was quickly arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to a ten-year prison term. Debs based his trial defense on the right to free speech, but until that time free-speech protections were often dispensed with during wartime. Debs' trial and subsequent incarceration became a focal point of a national debate over the extent of permissible free speech in times of national crisis. The Supreme Court unanimously upheld Debs' conviction, but when the war ended many influential Americans launched a nationwide protest against government repression, demanding amnesty for Debs and his fellow prisoners. By that time the Socialist Party had nominated Debs as its 1920 candidate for president using the slogan, "From the jail house to the White House." The Wilson administration acquiesced by releasing most prisoners before it left office in 1921, but Wilson himself, who emerges in this book as a very petty, stubborn, conniving, and mean-spirited character who hated Debs, refused to pardon him or commute his sentence despite the fact that Debs was a frail and sickly old man who suffered greatly from his incarceration.

Ironically, it took the good sense of President Harding and his Attorney General, Harry Daugherty, to release Debs. At one point while Debs was still a prisoner, Daugherty invited him to visit his office in Washington for a private chat. Debs was allowed to leave prison and to travel alone by train to Washington, DC. He dutifully returned to his jail house, but a few months later Harding not only commuted his sentence, but also invited him to visit him at the White House on his way home to Indiana.

The incarceration of Debs and his fellow political prisoners led in time to the formation of the American Civil Liberties Union and drastically changed the course of free speech during wartime. We owe Debs and his cohorts a debt of gratitude for enhancing the freedom of speech in this country while curtailing the ability of cruel authoritarian figures like Woodrow Wilson to curtail basic American freedoms.

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